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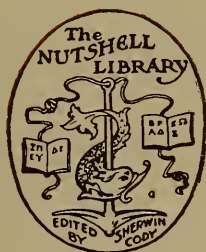
CHARLES LAMB

From the water color drawing by G. F. Joseph, (1819)

LAMB

Essays of Elia

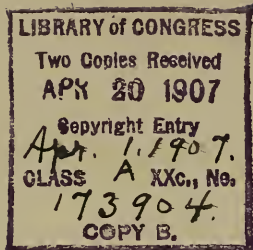
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LAMB

If you would read the works of Charles Lamb, you must know Charles Lamb the man, for he is the principal character in his own writings (at least those that we remember now and really care to read), and our love for the works and our love for the man are one and inseparable. The best a critic or biographer can do is to arrange Lamb's letters and essays in suitable order, and add a few hard facts here and there to make the connection plain.

In the heart of the old corporate city of London is a series of groups of buildings called the Inns of Court. There were and still are four of these "Inns," which are societies or corporations for the education of law students. In their old-fashioned way they correspond to our law schools. The courts are there, too, and the lawyers, young and old, have "chambers" there, where, amid ancient traditions and somewhat gloomy surroundings, they live and even keep their families, or at least their servants' families.

BORN IN THE LAW COURTS OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

Of these four "Inns," one of the most famous is "The Inner Temple," a name which hints of the fact that the law was originally administered by the clergy, who had their chapels here. "The Inner

Temple" was the general name for a group of buildings, including a little park. At No. 2 Crown Office Row, Charles Lamb was born Feb. 10, 1775, the youngest of seven children, only two of whom lived to grow up. His father, John Lamb, was the clerk, companion, and servant of Samuel Salt, a "Bencher" (one of the governing board of the school), and, with his family, occupied one of the two sets of chambers belonging to Samuel Salt.

In his essay on the Old Benchers, Lamb describes his father under the name of Lovel. He took absolute charge of Samuel Salt, and "was at once his clerk, his good servant, his dresser, his friend, his 'flapper,' his guide, his stop-watch, auditor, treasurer." Salt "did nothing without consulting Lovel, or failed in anything without expecting and fearing his admonishing." "L. was the liveliest little fellow breathing," Lamb goes on, "had a face as gay as Garrick's, whom he was said greatly to resemble (I have a portrait of him which confirms it), possessed a fine turn for humorous poetry—next to Swift and Prior—moulded heads in clay or plaster of Paris to admiration, by the dint of natural genius merely; turned cribbage boards, and such small cabinet toys, to perfection; took a hand at quadrille or bowls with equal facility; made punch better than any man of his degree in England; had the merriest quips and conceits, and was altogether as brimful of rogueries and inventions as you could desire."

And here is Lamb's picture of Samuel Salt: "S. had the reputation of being a very clever man, and

of excellent discernment in the chamber practice of law. I suspect his knowledge did not amount to much. When a case of difficult disposition of money, testamentary or otherwise came before him he ordinarily handed it over with a few instructions to his man Lovel, who was a quick little fellow, and would dispatch it out of hand by the light of natural understanding, of which he had an uncommon share. It was incredible what repute for talents S. enjoyed by the mere trick of gravity. He was a shy man; a child might pose him in a minute—indolent and procrastinating to the last degree. Yet men would give him credit for vast application in spite of himself. He was not to be trusted with himself with impunity. He never dressed for a dinner party but he forgot his sword—they wore swords then—or some other necessary part of his equipage. Lovel had his eye upon him on all these occasions, and ordinarily gave him his cue. If there was anything which he could speak unseasonably, he was sure to do it. He was to dine at a relative's of the unfortunate Miss Blandy on the day of her execution, and L., who had a wary foresight of his probable hallucinations, before he set out schooled him with great anxiety not in any possible manner to allude to her story that day. S. promised faithfully to observe the injunction. He had not been seated in the parlour where the company was expecting the dinner summons, four minutes when, a pause in the conversation ensuing, he got up, looked out of the window, and, pulling down his ruffles—an ordinary motion with him—observed, 'It was a gloomy day,'

and added, 'Miss Blandy must be hanged by this time, I suppose.'

"Instances of this sort were perpetual. Yet S. was thought by some of the greatest men of his time a fit person to be consulted, not alone in matters pertaining to the law, but in the ordinary niceties and embarrassments of conduct—from force of manner entirely. He never laughed. He had the same good fortune among the female world—was a known toast with the ladies, and one or two are said to have died for love of him—I suppose because he never trifled or talked gallantry with them, or paid them, indeed, hardly common attentions. He had a fine face and person."

AUNT HETTY.

In the Lamb family was a sister of Mr. Lamb, known as "Aunt Hetty." Mary Lamb describes her in a letter as follows: "My father had a sister who lived with us—of course, lived with my mother, her sister-in-law; they were, in their different ways, the best creatures in the world, but they set out wrong at first. They made each other miserable for full twenty years of their lives. My mother was a perfect gentlewoman, my aunty as unlike a gentlewoman as you can possibly imagine a good old woman to be; so that my dear mother (who, though you do not know it, is always in my poor head and heart) used to distress and weary her with incessant and unceasing attention and politeness, to gain her affection.

The old woman could not return this in kind,

and did not know what to make of it—thought it all deceit, and used to hate my mother with a bitter hatred—which, of course, was soon returned with interest. A little frankness, and looking into each other's characters at first, would have spared all this, and they would have lived, as they died, fond of each other for the last few years of their life."

Says Mr. Lucas, Lamb's biographer: "Probably Aunt Hetty found in her little nephew (Charles Lamb) the understanding that she needed; for imaginative sympathy, of which Charles Lamb had so great a share, is not a graft, but, in those who are blessed with it, a possession from their earliest days. One of Aunt Hetty's methods of requiting his comforting comprehension of her temperament was very practical," namely, giving him cakes, a subject to which he alludes in that passage in the "Essay on Roast Pig," in which he speaks of giving his cake to a beggar. And when Lamb went away to school he fared much better than the others by reason of Aunt Hetty's provisions.

IN THE BLUE-COAT SCHOOL WITH COLERIDGE.

As for Charles Lamb himself, we know he must have had a sense of humor from the earliest years, for when he was a child, Talfourd tells us, he was walking through a graveyard with his sister Mary, ten years older than he, and they read the inscriptions, all telling of the wonderful virtues of the dead, when the little fellow asked naïvely, "Mary, where are the naughty people buried?"

When the boy was seven and a half years old he

was admitted to Christ's Hospital, the famous "Blue-coat School," where so many famous writers have been educated, and whose boys in their long blue coats, knee breeches, and yellow stockings, with never a hat or cap on their heads, were familiar figures on the streets of London only a few years ago. The old school building has now been sold and the school itself removed to the country.

Coleridge, the poet, was admitted at almost the same time, though he was ten years old, and he became one of Lamb's closest and lifelong friends. Another of his school fellows was Charles Valentine Le Grice, who describes him as follows: "Lamb," he says, "was an amiable, gentle boy, very sensible and keenly observing, indulged by his school fellows and by his master on account of his infirmity of speech.* His countenance was mild; his complexion clear brown, with an expression which might lead you to think that he was of Jewish descent. His eyes were not each of the same colour, one was hazel, the other had specks of grey in the iris, mingled as we see red spots in the bloodstone. His step was plantigrade, which makes his walk slow and peculiar, adding to the staid appearance of his figure. I never heard his name mentioned without the addition of Charles, although, as there was no other boy of the name of Lamb, the addition was unnecessary; but there was an implied kindness in it, and it was a proof that his gentle manners excited that kindness.

*Lamb was a stammerer all his life.

"His delicate frame and his difficulty of utterance, which was increased by agitation, unfitted him for joining in any boisterous sport. The description which he gives, in his 'Recollections of Christ's Hospital,' of the habits and feelings of the schoolboy, is true in general, but is more particularly a delineation of himself—the feelings were all in his own heart—the portrait was his own: 'While others were all fire and play, he stole along with all the self-concentration of a young monk.' These habits and feelings were awakened and cherished in him by peculiar circumstances; he had been born and bred in the Inner Temple; and his parents continued to reside there while he was at school, so he passed from cloister to cloister, and this was all the change his young mind ever knew. On every half-holiday (and there were two in the week) in ten minutes he was in the gardens, on the terrace, or at the fountain of the Temple; here was his home, here his recreation; and the influence they had on his infant mind is vividly shown in his description of the Old Benchers."

Christ's Hospital had been founded for the benefit of the children of gentlemen, and Lamb and Coleridge were both charity students there. Admission had doubtless been procured for Lamb through Samuel Salt, one of the governors. There were scholarships which might have enabled Lamb to go on to the university, as did a majority of his school fellows, who were destined for the church. But Lamb's impediment in his speech precluded this, so at fifteen he left Christ's Hospital and two years later

we find him a clerk under his brother, John Lamb, at the South Sea House, which was the subject of his first essay. He did not stay there long, however, for Samuel Salt died in 1792 and the Lambs moved away from the Inner Temple, probably to Little Queen street. Both Mr. and Mrs. Lamb were remembered in Samuel Salt's will, and doubtless had accumulated considerable savings, though we soon hear of Mary Lamb at work as a mantua-maker. Within two months Charles was established in a new position in the East India house, where he remained for thirty-three years, finally retiring with a pension. He was a clerk or bookkeeper in the accountant's office and playfully referred to his "real works" as the hundred odd volumes which he filled with commercial entries.

HIS ONLY LOVE AFFAIR.

Lamb lived and died a bachelor, but he had a love affair with a girl he afterward in his essays called Alice W——. She was probably Ann Simmons, and he met her, it is supposed, during visits at his grandmother's, who lived in the country at Blakesware. He probably spent part of the two months between his leaving the South Sea House and his entry upon his duties at the India House at Blakesware, and here the romance reached its maturity. Nothing came of it, perhaps on account of Lamb's tendency to insanity, and the subsequent insanity of his sister Mary. That it was more than a youthful romance we have no reason to believe, though lovers of Lamb seem to like to dwell upon

it as a serious thing. About all we know of it is what Lamb tells us in his essay. Many years later he proposed marriage to Fanny Kelly, the actress, who was, and long continued to be, an intimate friend of his family; but she refused him, and they did not let this proposal interfere in their friendship.

LAMB'S SISTER MARY KILLS HER MOTHER.

Lamb says himself that he was confined for a few weeks at one time in a madhouse, but he soon recovered and never had any return of the malady. Such was not the case with his sister Mary. She had been working hard, caring for her mother, who was ill and to whom she was devoted, and also laboring assiduously as a mantua-maker, in September, 1796, when, on September 22nd, she suddenly became violently insane and stabbed her mother to death. She wounded her father, but not seriously. Lamb in a letter to Coleridge says he came in only in time to snatch the knife from her hand. She was immediately removed to a madhouse and placed in confinement.

On the 3rd of October Lamb wrote to Coleridge: "It will be a comfort to you to know that our prospects are somewhat brighter. My poor dear dearest sister, the unhappy and unconscious instrument of the Almighty's judgments to our house, is restored to her senses; to a dreadful sense and recollection of what has passed, awful to her mind, and impressive (as it must be to the end of life), but tempered with religious resignation, and the reasonings of a sound judgment, which in this early stage knows

how to distinguish between a deed committed in a transient fit of frenzy and the terrible guilt of a mother's murder. I have seen her. I found her this morning calm and serene, far, very, very far from an indecent forgetful serenity; she has a most affectionate and tender concern for what has happened. Indeed, from the beginning, frightful and hopeless as her disorder seemed, I had confidence enough in her strength of mind and religious principle to look forward to a time when ever she might recover tranquillity."

While the father lived, Mary was not allowed to return home; but after his death Charles Lamb undertook the care of his sister, and she was released on his guarantee to be responsible for her. Barry Cornwall says in his memoir of Lamb: "Whenever the approach of one of her fits of insanity was announced, by some irritability or change of manner, Lamb would take her, under his arm, to Hoxton asylum. It was very affecting to encounter the young brother and his sister walking together (weeping together) on this painful errand; Mary herself, although sad, was very conscious of the necessity for temporary separation from her only friend. They used to carry a straight jacket with them." Later as Lamb's finances improved, Mary was cared for privately, either at home or with a nurse elsewhere. Her fits lasted apparently for several weeks at a time, when she recovered completely and for a long time was her brother's most intimate and helpful companion, sharing in his literary work, entertaining his friends, and giving him the loving care he

might otherwise have received from a wife. The pair were very fond of each other, and not happy when long separated.

LAMB'S LOVE FOR LONDON.

In 1800 Lamb was offered rooms with his friend Gutch, and he writes to Coleridge,—“I have got three rooms (including servant) under £34 a year. Here I soon found myself at home; and here, in six weeks after, Mary was well enough to join me. So we are once more settled. . . . I have passed two days at Oxford on a visit, which I have long put off, to Gutch's family. The sight of the Bodleian Library, and, above all, a fine bust of Bishop Taylor at All' Souls', were particularly gratifying to me; unluckily, it was not a family where I could take Mary with me, and I am afraid there is something of dishonesty in any pleasures I take without *her*. She never goes anywhere.”

Lamb made the acquaintance of Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, and visited Grasmere, but he was all his life as passionate a lover of the city as Wordsworth was of the country. In a letter to Manning he says,—“I must confess that I am not romance-bit about *Nature*. The earth, and sea, and sky (when all is said) is but as a house to dwell in. If the inmates be courteous, and good liquors flow like the conduits at an old coronation, if they can talk sensibly and feel properly, I have no need to stand staring upon the gilded looking-glass (that strained my friend's purse-strings in the purchase), nor his five-shilling print over the mantelpiece of old Nabbs

the carrier (which only betrays his false taste). Just as important to me (in a sense) is all the furniture of my world—eye-pampering, but satisfies no heart. Streets, streets, streets, markets, theatres, churches, Covent Gardens, shops sparkling with pretty faces of industrious milliners, neat sempstresses, ladies cheapening, gentlemen behind counters lying, authors in the streets with spectacles, George Dyers (you may know them by their gait), lamps lit at night, pastry cooks, and silversmiths' shops, beautiful Quakers of Pentonville, noise of coaches, drowsy cry of mechanic watchmen at night, with bucks reeling home drunk; if you happen to wake at midnight, cries of 'fire' and 'stop thief'; inns of court, with their learned air, and halls, and butteries, just like Cambridge colleges, old book-stalls, Jeremy Taylors, Burtons on Melancholy, and Religio Medicis on every stall! These are thy pleasures, O London with-the-many-sins."

To the modern reader, Lamb is the literary spirit of London. Says Walter Pater in his *Appreciations*: "He felt the genius of places; and I sometimes think he resembles the place he knew and liked best—London, sixty-five years ago, with Covent Garden and the old theatres, and the Temple gardens still unspoiled, Thames gliding down, and beyond to north and south the fields of Enfield or Hampton, to which, 'with their living trees,' the thoughts wander 'from the hard wood of the desk.'"

MARY LAMB AND HER BROTHER.

Though it was Mary Lamb who brought the dark

cloud over the life of her brother, she was his companion, his collaborator, his friend, filling almost adequately the place of a wife to him, as Dorothy Wordsworth did for her brother William. Says Talfourd, Lamb's first adequate biographer,—“Miss Lamb would have been remarkable for the sweetness of her disposition, the clearness of her understanding, and the gentle wisdom of all her acts and words, even if these qualities had not been presented in marvellous contrast with the distraction under which she suffered for weeks, latterly for months, every year. There was no tinge of insanity discernible in her manner to the most observant eye; not even in those distressful periods when the premonitory symptoms had apprised her of its approach, and she was making preparations for seclusion. In all its essential sweetness, her character was like her brother's, while, by a temper more placid, a spirit of enjoyment more serene, she was enabled to guide, to counsel, to cheer him, and to protect him on the verge of the mysterious calamity, from the depths of which she rose so often unruffled to his side. To a friend in any difficulty she was the most comfortable of advisers, the wisest of consolers. Hazlitt used to say he never met with a woman who could reason, and had met with only one thoroughly reasonable—the sole exception being Mary Lamb.”

ODD, QUAIN, AND CURIOUS FRIENDS.

Lamb had a genius for picking up odd, quaint, and curious friends of every description. It mattered not to him whether the man had two shirts to his back,

or was able to eat two square meals a day, so he had some vein of quaint humor (for many of Lamb's friends evidently little suspected their own amusing side).

One of the first of these was George Dyer, whom Lamb has immortalized as "G. D." in two of his essays, "Oxford in Vacation" and "Amicus Redivivus." In a letter to Manning (another of his friends), dated Nov. 3, 1800, Lamb describes a new acquaintance, one after his own heart and characteristic of the genius he particularly fancied. "I have made an acquisition latterly of a pleasant hand," says he, "one Rickman, to whom I was introduced by George Dyer, not the most flattering auspices under which one man can be introduced to another—George brings all sorts of people together, setting up a sort of agrarian law, or common property, in matter of society; but for once he has done me a great pleasure, while he was only pursuing a principle, as *ignes fatui* may light you home. This Rickman lives in our buildings, immediately opposite our house; the finest fellow to drop in a' nights, about 9 or 10 o'clock—cold bread-and-cheese time—just in the *wishing* time of the night, when you *wish* for somebody to come in, without a distinct idea of a probable anybody. Just in the nick, neither too early to be tedious, nor too late to sit a reasonable time. He is a most pleasant hand; a fine, rattling fellow, has gone through life laughing at solemn apes; himself hugely literate, oppressively full of information in all stuff of conversation, from matter-of-fact to Xenophon and Plato—can talk Greek with

Porson, politics with Thelwall, conjecture with George Dyer, nonsense with me, and anything with anybody; a great farmer, somewhat concerned in an agricultural magazine—reads no poetry but Shakspeare, very intimate with Southey, but never reads his poetry; relishes George Dyer, thoroughly penetrates into the ridiculous wherever found, understands the *first time* (a great desideratum in common minds)—you need never speak twice to him; does not want explanations, translations, limitations, as Professor Godwin does when you make an assertion; *up* to anything, *down* to everything—whatever *sapit hominem*. A perfect *man*. All this farrago, which must perplex you to read, and has put me to a little trouble to *select*! only proves how impossible it is to describe a *pleasant hand*. You must see Rickman to know him, for he is a species in one. A new class. An exotic, any slip of which I am proud to put in my garden spot. The clearest-headed fellow. Fullest of matter with least verbosity.”

That is just the sort of fellow Lamb liked and was always looking for, and very often finding. In his modest chambers with his sister Mary as unconventional hostess, he gathered these about him, and probably enjoyed life as much as any man who ever lived.

THE “CONVIVIAL CUP.”

Of course, in those days, the “convivial cup” was ever present when friends were gathered together, and under the influence of it Lamb bubbled over with his choicest humor. It has been hinted that the cup

was Lamb's single weakness. On this point Talfourd says, "Will anyone, acquainted with these secret passages of Lamb's history, wonder that, with a strong physical inclination for the stimulus and support of strong drinks—which man is framed moderately to rejoice in—he should snatch some wild pleasure 'between the acts' (as he called it) 'of his distressful drama,' and that, still more, during the loneliness of the solitude created by his sister's absences, he should obtain the solace of an hour's feverish dream? That, notwithstanding that frailty, he performed the duties of his hard lot with exemplary steadiness and discretion is indeed wonderful—especially when it is recollected that he had himself been visited, when in the dawn of manhood, with his sister's malady, the seeds of which were doubtless in his frame. While that original predisposition may explain an occasional flightiness of expression on serious matters, fruit of some wayward fancy, which flitted through his brain, without disturbing his constant reason or reaching his heart, and some little extravagances of fitful mirth, how does it heighten the moral courage by which the disease was controlled and the severest duties performed! Never, surely, was there a more striking example of the power of a virtuous, rather say of a pious, wish to conquer the fiery suggestions of latent insanity than that presented by Lamb's history. Nervous, tremulous, as he seemed—so slight of frame that he looked only fit for the most placid fortune—when the dismal emergencies which checkered his life

arose, he acted with as much promptitude and vigour as if he had never penned a stanza nor taken a glass too much, or was strung with herculean sinews."

A CLERK ALL HIS LIFE.

Lamb was a clerk at the East India House for thirty-three years. The first three years, beginning in 1792, he was on probation and received no salary. In 1795 he began to get a salary of forty pounds a year, which was increased the next year to seventy pounds, and rose steadily till, when he retired, he was getting seven hundred and thirty pounds a year. He was then retired on a pension of four hundred and fifty pounds a year, which he received until his death. Any bookkeeper in these days even who received as much would be thought fortunate. As far as money was concerned, Lamb lived in moderate comfort all his life.

No mention has been made of Lamb's literary work. The fact is, he obtained no real success till he was forty-five, and in 1820 began the essays of Elia in the *London Magazine*. Yet all his life he had been an aspiring unsuccessful author, trying poetry first under the influence of Coleridge and having some of his verses published in a volume with Coleridge in 1796. In 1798, after the death of his mother and also of his Aunt Hetty, Lamb wrote the one poem which is today a household word, "The Old Familiar Faces." In their original form the verses ran thus:

THE OLD FAMILIAR FACES.

Where are they gone, the old familiar faces?
I had a mother, but she died, and left me,
Died prematurely in a day of horrors—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school days—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I loved a love, once, fairest among women,
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man.
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like I paced 'round the haunts of my childhood,
Earth seemed a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother's,
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces?

For some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed;
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

When the poem was reprinted in 1818 Lamb omitted the first stanza, no doubt to avoid paining his sister. The friend of the fifth stanza is Charles Lloyd, some of whose verses are published with Lamb's in Coleridge's volume, and who occasioned an estrangement between Lamb and Coleridge, and finally went out of the lives of both. The friend in the seventh stanza is Coleridge himself. The italicized words in the last stanza refer to Mary Lamb's sequestration at the asylum. One other beautiful poem he wrote when past fifty, "On an Infant Dying as Soon as Born."

LITERARY AMBITIONS.

In 1898 he wrote a novel, *Rosamund Gray*. It was a simple story, into which Lamb introduced himself and many of his friends, and it has "a very distinct and interesting strain of eeriness." Had it not been for the later essays the book would be quite forgotten in our day, however. In the same year, 1798, Lamb had been writing a tragedy entitled *John Woodvil*. In 1800 we find him trying to get John Philip Kemble to put the piece on the stage, but in vain, and in 1802 he had it published in book form. The critics did not receive it at all kindly.

In 1801 we find Lamb writing paragraphs for a poor, struggling, anti-ministerial political paper—"an outcast from politer bread," he says, "we attached our small talents to the forlorn fortunes of our friend. Our occupation was now to write treason."

The same year Lamb tried to write paragraphs for the *Morning Chronicle*, to add something to his in-

come, but most of his work was rejected. And then he tried the *Morning Post*, whose editor, Stuart, was a friend of Coleridge. "But as for poor Charles Lamb," says Stuart, writing many years later of Coleridge's contributions to the morning *Post*, "I never could make anything of him." His contributions consisted for the most part of very short humorous personal paragraphs, such as today we find on the editorial pages of most of our newspapers. Their strong points seems to be the italicizing of three or four words in each paragraph. He describes his work in his *Elia* essay on "Newspapers," in which he says he received sixpence a joke. In 1805 he had lost this work, and did not again return to it.

In the later years he wrote some verses for children, which were published in a very small illustrated volume, by William Godwin, who was trying to add to his income by bringing out juvenile books (his own and such others as he could obtain). The next year, however, Mary Lamb prepared for Godwin six "Tales from Shakespeare," and Charles Lamb himself did others. In a letter to Manning he says the work is to bring in sixty guineas. In a letter to her friend, Sarah Stoddart, Mary Lamb writes: "Charles has written *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and has begun *Hamlet*; you would like to see us, as we often sit writing at one table (but not on one cushion sitting), like *Hermia* and *Helena* in *Midsummer Night's Dream*; or rather, like an old literary *Darby* and *Joan*; I taking snuff, and he groaning all the while, and saying he can make nothing of

it, which he always says till he has finished, and then he finds out that he has made something of it. . . . Charles smokes still, and will smoke to the end of the chapter."

These *Tales from Shakespeare* are more popular today than they ever were, and are no more likely to be forgotten than "The Old Familiar Faces." The brother and sister collaborated on a series of stories for children publisher as *Mrs. Leicester's School*, but Mary Lamb wrote all but three. Charles was busy editing a volume of "Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Who Lived About the Time of Shakespeare." Lamb also wrote and published a story for children entitled *Adventures of Ulysses*, but it was not as popular as the other children's volumes. In 1809 appeared a volume of *Poetry for Children*, and in 1811 *Prince Dorus*, a fairy tale.

In 1810 a quarterly was projected by Leigh Hunt, and Lamb contributed to it some of his first essays. His criticisms of Hogarth and of Shakspeare's tragedies were never surpassed. Yet he had not found himself. *The Reflector* went out of existence with its fourth number.

Lamb was determined to be a dramatic author and finally a farce entitled "Mr. H." (it turns on the unpleasant name of the principal character, which was "Hogflesh") was actually put on the stage. A friendly company of clerks came from the East India House, and another from the South-Sea House, but it would not do. It was heartily condemned and Lamb himself, we are told, joined in the hisses as cordially as any—he said later because he

was so damnably afraid of being taken for the author. This ended his ambitions as a playwright.

Nothing else of importance was produced until 1818, when Lamb brought out his collected "Works," thinking his literary career was ended. As a matter of fact, the work by which alone he is known had not even been thought of.

THE ORIGIN OF ELIA.

The *London Magazine* was started in 1820, and Lamb was asked for a contribution. He wrote "Recollections of the South-Sea House," where he had been a clerk for a few months eighteen years before, but with which he was no doubt familiar through his brother's engagement there for many years. Says Lamb in a letter to Taylor, who published the magazine, "Having a brother now there (at the South-Sea House), and doubting how he might relish certain descriptions of it, I clapt down the name of Elia to it, which passed off pretty well, for Elia himself added the functions of an author to that of a scrivener, like myself." Elia was the name of a clerk at the South-Sea House when Lamb was there, and in a letter to Taylor he adds, "I went the other day (not having seen him [Elia] for a year) to laugh over with him at my usurpation of his name, and found him, alas! no more than a name, for he had died of consumption eleven months ago, and I knew not of it. So the name had fairly devolved on me, I think; and 'tis all he has left me." It is said all trace of the original Elia and his writings has disappeared.

Mr. Lucas thinks the "comparative thinness of

Lamb's pre-Elia writings and the Elia richness and colour" may be accounted for by the very fact that Lamb was constitutionally unable to do his best except affecting to be some one else. "The innocent imposture confers courage, disarms diffidence." Says Barry Cornwall, "He was himself eminently modest; he never put himself forward; he was always sought. He had much to say on many subjects, and he was repeatedly pressed to say this before he consented to do so. He was almost teased into writing the Elia essays." He was paid two or three times as much as the other authors, yet in two years he had been paid less than a thousand dollars.

WHAT ELIA IS TO LITERATURE.

The Essays of Elia are nearly all simple descriptions of Lamb himself and his friends and the scenes he was familiar with. They were very little influenced by anything before their time, and they have never since been successfully imitated. "Their 'facts' are not of the utilitarian order; their humour leads rarely to loud laughter; rather to the quiet smile; they are not stories, they are not poems; they are not difficult enough to suggest 'mental improvement' to those who count it loss unless they are puzzled, nor simple enough for those who demand of their authors no confounded nonsense.

"At the same time, English literature has nothing that in its way is better than Elia's best. The blend of sanity, sweet reasonableness, tender fancy, high imagination, sympathetic understanding of human nature, and humour, now wistful, now frolicsome, with

literary skill of unsurpassed delicacy, make Elia unique. . . .

"But why is Elia so treasured a volume. . . . Because Elia describes with so much sympathy most of the normal feelings of mankind, because Lamb understands so much, and is so cheering to the lowly, so companionable to the luckless. He is always on the side of those who need a friend. He is 'in love with the green earth,' he never soars out of reach, never withholds his tolerance for our weaknesses."

Swinburne says, "No good criticism of Lamb, strictly speaking, can ever be written; because nobody can do justice to his work who does not love it too well to feel himself capable of giving judgment upon it. . . . The truth is simple and indisputable that no labour could be at once so delightful and so useless, so attractive and so vain, as the task of writing in praise of Lamb. Any man or any child who can feel anything of his charm utters better praise of him in silence than any array of epithets or periods could give. Any man or any woman who can feel nothing of his charm is outside the pale of any possible influence or impression from any reasoning or any enthusiasm of others."

Lamb has described himself so well in his own essays, notably "New Year's Eve," "Imperfect Sympathies," and the "Character of the Late Elia," that it seems foolish to waste our time upon the words of others.

Writing to John Taylor, editor of the *London Magazine*, Lamb says of himself, "Poor Elia does not pretend to so very clear revelations of a future

state of being as Olen seems gifted with. He stumbles about dark mountains at best; but he knows at least how to be thankful for this life, and is too thankful indeed for certain relationships lent him here, not to tremble for a possible resumption of the gift. He is too apt to express himself lightly, and cannot be sorry for the present occasion, as it has called forth a reproof so Christian-like." This was apropos of a poem published in the *London Magazine* in which Charles Abraham Elton, signing himself "Olen," reasoned gently but firmly with Elia's unhappy skepticism—"it set up a cheerful Christian certainty in place of Lamb's wistful hesitations," and finally offered him a blissful picture of union with his "Alice" in heaven if he was good. Elsewhere Lamb says, "I am in love with this green earth." His religious creed was that it was best to be thankful for this life and make the most of it, whatever may be beyond.

The last years of Lamb's life were made happy by a young girl whom he and Mary adopted in 1823. She was Emma Isola, granddaughter of Agostino Isola, a teacher of Italian at Cambridge. The Lambs first saw the little girl on a visit to Cambridge in 1820. She was eleven years old and motherless. In the following January she went to visit them, and when her father died they adopted her. She married Edward Moxon, the publisher, in 1833. Lamb in a letter describing the wedding says, "I tripped a little at the altar, was engaged in admiring the altar-piece, but, recalled seasonably by a Parsonic

rebuke, 'Who gives this woman!' was in time to reply resolutely, 'I do.'"

At the end of 1822 he tired of Elia and attempted to kill off the character, but it was revived and more Elia essays were written. The contributions to the *London Magazine* continued until 1825. The first volume of *Essays of Elia* was published in 1823. Ten years later was published *Last Essays of Elia*, and in the following year, December 27, 1834, Lamb died. Mary Lamb lived eleven years longer. She received one hundred and twenty pounds a year pension from the East India House Clerks' Fund, and Lamb left two thousand pounds.

ESSAYS OF ELIA

THE OLD BENCHERS OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

I was born, and passed the first seven years of my life, in the Temple. Its church, its halls, its gardens, its fountains, its river, I had almost said—for in those young years, what was this king of rivers to me but a stream that watered our pleasant places? these are of my oldest recollection. I repeat, to this day, no verses to myself more frequently, or with kindlier emotion, than those of Spenser, where he speaks of this spot:

There when they came, whereas those bricky towers,
The which on Themmes brode aged back doth ride.
Where now the studious lawyers have their bowers.
There whylome wont the Templar knights to bide,
Till they decayed through pride.

Indeed, it is the most elegant spot in the metropolis. What a transition for a countryman visiting London for the first time—the passing from the crowded Strand or Fleet street, by unexpected avenues, into its magnificent ample squares, its classic green recesses! What a cheerful, liberal look hath that portion of it, which, from three sides, overlooks the greater garden; that goodly pile

Of building strong, albeit of paper height,

confronting with massy contrast, the lighter, older, more fantastically-shrouded one, named of Harcourt, with the cheerful Crown-Office-row (place of my kindly engendure), right opposite the stately stream; which washes the garden-foot with her yet scarcely trade-polluted waters, and seems but just weaned from her Twickenham Naiades! a man would give something to have been born in such places. What a collegiate aspect has that fine Elizabethan hall, where the fountain plays, which I have made to rise and fall, how many times, to the astoundment of the young urchins, my contemporaries, who, not being able to guess at its recondite machinery, were almost tempted to hail the wondrous work as magic. What an antique air had the now almost effaced sundials, with their moral inscriptions, seeming coevals with that Time which they measured, and to take their revelations of its flight immediately from heaven, holding correspondence with the fountain of light. How would the dark line steal imperceptibly on, watched by the eye of childhood, eager to detect its movement, never caught, nice as an evanescent cloud, or the first arrests of sleep.

Ah! yet doth beauty like a dial hand
Steal from his figure, and no pace perceived!

What a dead thing is a clock, with its ponderous embowelments of lead and brass, its pert or solemn dullness of communication, compared with the sim-

ple, altar-like structure and silent heart-language of the old dial! It stood as the garden god of Christian gardens. Why is it almost everywhere vanished? If its business use be superseded by more elaborate inventions, its moral uses, its beauty, might have pleaded for its continuance. It spoke of moderate labours, of pleasures not protracted after sunset, of temperance and good hours. It was the primitive clock, the horologe of the first world. Adam could scarce have missed it in Paradise. It was the measure appropriate for sweet plants and flowers to spring by, for the birds to apportion their silver warblings by, for flocks to pasture and be led to fold by. The shepherd "carved it out quaintly in the sun"; and, turning philosopher by the very occupation, provided it with mottoes more touching than tombstones. It was a pretty device of the gardener, recorded by Marvell, who, in the days of artificial gardening, made a dial out of herbs and flowers. I must quote his verses a little higher up, for they are full, as all his serious poetry was, of witty delicacy. They will not come in awkwardly, I hope, in a talk of fountains and sun-dials. He is speaking of sweet garden scenes:

What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head.
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine.
The nectarine, and curious peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach.
Stumbling on melons as I pass,
Insnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind from pleasures less
Withdraws into its happiness.
The mind, that ocean, where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds and other seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.
Here at the fountain's sliding foot
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide;
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets and claps its silver wings,
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.
How well the skillful gardener drew
Of flowers and herbs, this dial new,
Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run:
And, as it works, the industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckoned, but with herbs and flowers?*

The artificial fountains of the metropolis are, in like manner, fast vanishing. Most of them are dried up or bricked over. Yet, where one is left, as in that little green nook behind the South-Sea House, what a freshness it gives to the dreary pile. Four little winged marble boys used to play their virgin

*From a copy of verses entitled "The Garden."

fancies, spouting out ever fresh streams from their innocent-wanton lips in the square of Lincoln's Inn, when I was no bigger than they were figured. They are gone and the spring choked up. The fashion, they tell me, is gone by, and these things are esteemed childish. Why not, then, gratify children, by letting them stand? Lawyers, I suppose, were children once. They are awakening images to them at least. Why must everything smack of man and mannish? Is the world all grown up? Is childhood dead? Or is there not in the bosoms of the wisest and the best some of the child's heart left to respond to its earliest enchantments? The figures were grotesque. Are the stiff-wigged living figures, that still flitter and chatter about that area, less Gothic in appearance? or is the splutter of their hot rhetoric one-half so refreshing and innocent as the little cool, playful streams those exploded cherubs uttered?

They have lately gothicized the entrance to the Inner Temple-hall, and the library front; to assimilate them, I suppose, to the body of the hall, which they do not at all resemble. What is become of the winged horse that stood over the former? a stately arms! and who has removed those frescoes of the Virtues, which Italianized the end of the Paper-buildings? my first hint of allegory! They must account to me for these things, which I miss so greatly.

The terrace is, indeed, left, which we used to call the parade; but the traces are passed away of the footsteps which made its pavement awful! It is

become common and profane. The old benchers had it almost sacred to themselves, in the fore part of the day at least. They might not be sided or jostled. Their air and dress asserted the parade. You left wide spaces betwixt you when you passed them. We walk on even terms with their successors. The roguish eye of J—ll, ever ready to be delivered of a jest, almost invites a stranger to vie a repartee with it. But what insolent familiar durst have mated Thomas Coventry? whose person was a quadrate, his step massy and elephantine, his face square as the lion's, his gait peremptory and path-keeping, indivertible from his way as a moving column, the scarecrow of his inferiors, the browbeater of equals and superiors, who made a solitude of children wherever he came, for they fled his insufferable presence, as they would have shunned an Elisha bear. His growl was as thunder in their ears, whether he spake to them in mirth or in rebuke; his invitatory notes being, indeed, of all, the most repulsive and horrid. Clouds of snuff, aggravating the natural terrors of his speech, broke from each majestic nostril, darkening the air. He took it, not by pinches, but a palmful at once, diving for it under the mighty flaps of his old-fashioned waistcoat pocket; his waistcoat red and angry, his coat dark rappee, tintured by dye original, and by adjuncts, with buttons of absolute gold. And so he paced the terrace.

By his side a milder form was sometimes to be seen; the pensive gentility of Samuel Salt. They were coevals, and had nothing but that and their

benchership in common. In politics Salt was a whig, and Coventry a staunch tory. Many a sarcastic growl did the latter cast out—for Coventry had a rough spinous humor—at the political confederates of his associate, which rebounded from the gentle bosom of the latter like cannon-balls from wool. You could not ruffle Samuel Salt.

S. had the reputation of being a very clever man, and of excellent discernment in the chamber practice of the law. I suspect his knowledge did not amount to much. When a case of difficult disposition of money, testamentary or otherwise, came before him, he ordinarily handed it over, with a few instructions, to his man Lovel, who was a quick little fellow, and would despatch it out of hand by the light of natural understanding, of which he had an uncommon share. It was incredible what repute for talents S. enjoyed by the mere trick of gravity. He was a shy man; a child might pose him in a minute—indolent and procrastinating to the last degree. Yet men would give him credit for vast application, in spite of himself. He was not to be trusted with himself with impunity. He never dressed for a dinner party but he forgot his sword—they wore swords then—or some other necessary part of his equipage. Lovel had his eye upon him on all these occasions, and ordinarily gave him his cue. If there was anything which he could speak unseasonably, he was sure to do it. He was to dine at a relative's of the unfortunate Miss Blandy on the day of her execution; and L., who had a wary foresight of his probable hallucinations, before he set out schooled

him, with great anxiety, not in any possible manner to allude to her story that day. S. promised faithfully to observe the injunction. He had not been seated in the parlour, where the company was expecting the dinner summons, four minutes, when, a pause in the conversation ensuing, he got up, looked out of the window, and pulling down his ruffles—an ordinary motion with him—observed, “it was a gloomy day,” and added, “Miss Blandy must be hanged by this time, I suppose.” Instances of this sort were perpetual. Yet S. was thought by some of the greatest men of his time a fit person to be consulted, not alone in matters pertaining to the law, but in the ordinary niceties and embarrassments of conduct—from force of manner entirely. He never laughed. He had the same good fortune among the female world—was a known toast with the ladies, and one or two are said to have died for love of him—I suppose, because he never trifled or talked gallantly with them, or paid them, indeed, hardly common attentions. He had a fine face and person, but wanted, methought, the spirit that should have shown them off with advantage to the women. His eye lacked luster. Not so, thought Susan P——; who, at the advanced age of sixty, was seen, in the cold evening time, unaccompanied, wetting the pavement of B——d Row with tears that fell in drops which might be heard, because her friend had died that day—he, whom she had pursued with a hopeless passion for the last forty years—a passion which years could not extinguish or abate; nor the long-resolved, yet gently-enforced, puttings off of unre-

lenting bachelorhood dissuade from its cherished purpose. Mild Susan P——, thou hast now thy friend in heaven!

Thomas Coventry was a cadet of the noble family of that name. He passed his youth in contracted circumstances, which gave him early those parsimonious habits which in after life never forsook him; so that with one windfall or another, about the time I knew him, he was master of four or five hundred thousand pounds; nor did he look or walk worth a moidore less. He lived in a gloomy house opposite the pump in Serjeant's-inn, Fleet street. J., the counsel, is doing self-imposed penance in it, for what reason I divine not, at this day. C. had an agreeable seat at North Cray, where he seldom spent above a day or two at a time in the summer; but preferred, during the hot months, standing at his window in this damp, close, well-like mansion, to watch, as he said, "the maids drawing water all day long." I suspect he had his within-door reasons for the preference. *Hic currus et arma fuêre*. He might think his treasures more safe. His house had the aspect of a strong box. C. was a close hunk—a hoarder rather than a miser—or, if a miser, none of the mad Elwes breed, who have brought discredit upon a character which cannot exist without certain admirable points of steadiness and unity of purpose. One may hate a true miser, but cannot, I suspect, so easily despise him. By taking care of the pence he is often enabled to part with the pounds, upon a scale that leaves us careless, generous fellows halting at an immeasurable distance behind. C. gave

away £30,000 at once in his lifetime to a blind charity. His housekeeping was severely looked after, but he kept the table of a gentleman. He would know who came in and who went out of his house, but his kitchen chimney was never suffered to freeze.

Salt was his opposite in this, as in all—never knew what he was worth in the world; and having but a competency for his rank, which his indolent habits were little calculated to improve, might have suffered severely if he had not had honest people about him. Lovel took care of everything. He was at once his clerk, his good servant, his dresser, his friend, his “flapper,” his guide, stop-watch, auditor, treasurer. He did nothing without consulting Lovel, or failed in anything without expecting and fearing his admonishing. He put himself almost too much in his hands, had they not been the purest in the world. He resigned his title almost to respect as a master, if L. could ever have forgotten for a moment that he was a servant.

I knew this Lovel. He was a man of an incorrigible and losing honesty. A good fellow withal, and “would strike.” In the cause of the oppressed he never considered inequalities, or calculated the number of his opponents. He once wrested a sword out of the hand of a man of quality that had drawn upon him, and pommeled him severely with the hilt of it. The swordsman had offered insult to a female—an occasion upon which no odds against him could have prevented the interference of Lovel. He would stand next day bareheaded to the same person modestly to excuse his interference—for L. never

forgot rank where something better was not concerned. L. was the liveliest little fellow breathing, had a face as gay as Garrick's, whom he was said greatly to resemble (I have a portrait of him which confirms it), possessed a fine turn for humorous poetry—next to Swift and Prior—molded heads in clay or plaster of Paris to admiration, by the dint of natural genius merely; turned cribbage boards, and such small cabinet toys, to perfection; took a hand at quadrille or bowls with equal facility; made punch better than any man of his degree in England; had the merriest quips and conceits; and was altogether as brimful of rogueries and inventions as you could desire. He was a brother of the angle, moreover, and just such a free, hearty, honest companion as Mr. Izaak Walton would have chosen to go a-fishing with. I saw him in his old age and the decay of his faculties, palsy-smitten, in the last sad stage of human weakness—"a remnant most forlorn of what he was"—yet even then his eye would light up upon the mention of favorite Garrick. He was greatest, he would say, in Bayes—"was upon the stage nearly throughout the whole performance, and as busy as a bee." At intervals, too, he would speak of his former life, and how he came up a little boy from Lincoln, to go to service, and how his mother cried at parting with him, and how he returned, after some few years' absence, in his smart new livery, to see her, and she blest herself at the change, and could hardly be brought to believe that it was "her own bairn." And then, the excitement subsiding, he would weep, till I have wished that sad second-childhood might have

a mother still to lay its head upon her lap. But the common mother of us all in no long time after received him gently into hers.

With Coventry and with Salt, in their walks upon the terrace, most commonly Peter Pierson would join to make up a third. They did not walk linked arm-in-arm in those days—"as now our stout triumvirs sweep the streets"—but generally with both hands folded behind them for state, or with one at least behind the other carrying a cane. P. was a benevolent, but not a prepossessing man. He had that in his face which you could not term unhappiness; it rather implied an incapacity of being happy. His cheeks were colorless, even to whiteness. His look was uninviting, resembling (but without his sourness) that of our great philanthropist. I know that he *did* good acts, but I could never make out what he *was*. Contemporary with these, but subordinate, was Daines Barrington—another oddity—he walked burly and square, in imitation, I think, of Coventry—howbeit he attained not to the dignity of his prototype. Nevertheless, he did pretty well, upon the strength of being a tolerable antiquarian, and having a brother a bishop. When the account of his year's treasurership came to be audited, the following singular charge was unanimously disallowed by the bench: "Item, disbursed Mr. Allen, the gardener, twenty shillings for stuff to poison the sparrows, by my orders." Next to him was old Barton, a jolly negation, who took upon him the ordering of the bills of fare for the parliament chamber, where the benchers dine—answering to the combination rooms

at College—much to the easement of his less epicurean brethren. I know nothing more of him. Then Read, and Twopenny—Reed good-humoured and personable—Twopenny, good-humoured, but thin, and felicitous in jests upon his own figure. If T. was thin, Wharry was attenuated and fleeting. Many must member him (for he was rather of later date) and his singular gait, which was performed by three steps and a jump regularly succeeding. The steps were little efforts, like that of a child beginning to walk; the jump comparatively vigorous, as a foot to an inch. Where he learned this figure, or what occasioned it, I could never discover. It was neither graceful in itself, nor seemed to answer the purpose any better than common walking. The extreme tenuity of his frame, I suspect, set him upon it. It was a trial of poising. Twopenny would often rally him upon his leanness, and hail him as Brother Lusty; but W. had no relish of a joke. His features were spiteful. I have heard that he would pinch his cat's ears extremely when anything had offended him. Jackson—the omniscient Jackson, he was called—was of this period. He had the reputation of possessing more multifarious knowledge than any man of his time. He was the Friar Bacon of the less literate portion of the Temple. I remember a pleasant passage of the cook applying to him, with much formality of apology, for instructions how to write down *edge* bone of beef in his bill of commons. He was supposed to know, if any man in the world did. He decided the orthography to be—as I have given it—fortifying his authority with such anatomical rea-

sons as dismissed the manacle (for the time) learned and happy. Some do spell it yet, perversely, *aitch* bone, from a fanciful resemblance between its shape and that of the aspirate so denominated. I had almost forgotten Mingay with the iron hand—but he was somewhat later. He had lost his right hand by some accident, and supplied it with a grappling-hook, which he wielded with a tolerable adroitness. I detected the substitute before I was old enough to reason whether it were artificial or not. I remember the astonishment it raised in me. He was a blustering, loud-talking person; and I reconciled the phenomenon to my ideas as an emblem of power—somewhat like the horns in the forehead of Michael Angelo's Moses. Baron Maseres, who walks (or did till very lately) in the costume of the reign of George the Second, closes my imperfect recollections of the old bachelors of the Inner Temple.

Fantastic forms, whither are ye fled? Or, if the like of you exist, why exist they no more for me? Ye inexplicable, half-understood appearances, why comes in reason to tear away the preternatural mist, bright or gloomy, that enshrouded you? Why make ye so sorry a figure in my relation, who made up to me—to my childish eyes—the mythology of the Temple? In those days I saw Gods, as "old men covered with a mantle," walking upon the earth. Let the dreams of classic idolatry perish—extinct be the fairies and fairy trumpery of legendary fabling, in the heart of childhood there will, forever, spring up a well of innocent or wholesome superstition—the seeds of exaggeration will be busy there, and vital

—from every-day forms educating the unknown and the uncommon. In that little Goshen there will be light when the grown world flounders about in the darkness of sense and materiality. While childhood, and while dreams, reducing childhood, shall be left, imagination shall not have spread her holy wings totally to fly the earth.

P. S.—I have done injustice to the soft shade of Samuel Salt. See what it is to trust to imperfect memory, and the erring notices of childhood! Yet I protest that I always thought that he had been a bachelor! This gentleman, R. N. informs me, married young, and losing his lady in childbed, within the first year of their union, fell into a deep melancholy, from the effects of which, probably, he never thoroughly recovered. In what a new light does this place his rejection (O call it by a gentler name!) of mild Susan P——, unravelling into beauty certain peculiarities of this very shy and retiring character! Henceforth let no one receive the narratives of Elia for true records! They are, in truth, but shadows of fact—versimilitudes, not verities—or sitting but upon the remote edges and outskirts of history. He is no such honest chronicler as R. N. and would have done better perhaps to have consulted that gentleman before he sent these incondite reminiscences to press. But the worthy sub-treasurer—who respects his old and his new masters—would but have been puzzled at the indecorous liberties of Elia. The good man wots not, peradventure, of the license which *Magazines* have arrived at in this plain-speaking age, or hardly

dreams of their existence beyond the *Gentleman's*—his furthest monthly excursions in this nature having been long confined to the holy ground of honest *Urban's* obituary. May it be long before his own name shall help to swell those columns of unenvied flattery. Meantime, O ye New Benchers of the Inner Temple, cherish him kindly, for he is himself the kindest of human creatures. Should infirmity overtake him—he is yet in green and vigorous senility—make allowances for them, remembering that “ye yourselves are old.” So may the Winged Horse, your ancient badge and cognizance, still flourish; So may future Hookers and Seldens illustrate your church and chambers! So may the sparrows, in default of more melodious quiristers, unpoisoned hop about your walks! So may the fresh-colored and cleanly nursery-maid, who, by leave, airs her playful charge in your stately gardens, drop her prettiest blushing courtesy as ye pass, reductive of juvenescent emotion! So may the youngers of this generation eye you, pacing your stately terrace, with the same superstitious veneration with which the child Elia gazed on the Old Worthies that solemnized the parade before ye!

DREAM CHILDREN; A REVERIE.

Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle, or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Red-breasts; till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only charge of it and yet in some respects she might be said to be mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased

somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterward came to decay and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighbourhood for miles round to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psalter by heart, ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was; and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen

at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm;" and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great house in the holy-days, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself in gazing upon the old busts of the twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about the huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about the old melancholy-looking yew-trees or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir-apples which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery till I could almost fancy myself ripening too, along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth,

or in watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings. I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavors of peaches, nectarines, oranges and such-like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle John L——, because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most nettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their great uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great grandmother Field most especially, and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain; and how in after life he became lame-footed

too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterward it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and I wished him to be alive again, to be quarreling with him (for we quarreled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he, their poor uncle, must have been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for Uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n; and as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial, meant in maidens—when suddenly turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of representment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair

was; and while I stood gazing both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all! The children of Alice called Bartrum father. We are nothing, less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe millions of ages before we have existence and a name"—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone forever.

MY FIRST PLAY.

At the north end of Cross-court there yet stands a portal, of some architectural pretensions, though reduced to humble use, serving at present for an entrance to a printing-office. This old door-way, if you are young, reader, you may not know was the identical pit entrance to old Drury—Garrick's Drury—all of it that is left. I never pass it without shaking some forty years from off my shoulders, recurring to the evening when I passed through it to see *my first play*. The afternoon had been wet, and the condition of our going (the elder folks and myself) was, that the rain should cease. With what a beat-

ing heart did I watch from the window the puddles, from the stillness of which I was taught to prognosticate the desired cessation! I seem to remember the last spurt, and the glee with which I ran to announce it.

We went with orders, which my godfather F. had sent us. He kept the oil shop (now Davis') at the corner of Featherstone-buildings, in Holborn. F. was a tall grave person, lofty in speech, and had pretensions above his rank. He associated in those days with John Palmer, the comedian, whose gait and bearing he seemed to copy; if John (which is quite as likely) did not rather borrow somewhat of his manner from my godfather. He was also known to and visited by Sheridan. It was to his house in Holborn that young Brinsley brought his first wife on her elopement with him from the boarding school at Bath—the beautiful Maria Linley. My parents were present (over a quadrille table) when he arrived in the evening with his harmonious charge. From either of these connections it may be inferred that my godfather could command an order for the then Drury-lane Theater at pleasure—and, indeed, a pretty liberal issue of those cheap billets, in Brinsley's easy autograph, I have heard him say was the sole remuneration which he had received for many years' nightly illumination of the orchestra and various avenues of that theater—and he was content it should be so. The honour of Sheridan's familiarity—or supposed familiarity—was better to my godfather than money.

F. was the most gentlemanly of oilmen; grandilo-

quent, yet courteous. His delivery of the commonest matters of fact was Ciceronian. He had two Latin words almost constantly in his mouth (how odd sounds Latin from an oilman's lips) which my better knowledge since has enabled me to correct. In strict pronunciation they should have been sounded *vice versa*, but in those young ears they impressed me with more awe than they would now do, read aright from Seneca or Varro, in his own peculiar pronunciation, monosyllabically elaborated, or Anglicised, into something like *verse verse*. By an imposing manner, and the help of these distorted syllables, he climbed (but that was little) to the highest parochial honours which St. Andrew's has to bestow.

He is dead—and thus much I thought due to his memory, both for my first orders (little wondrous talismans!—slight keys, and insignificant to outward sight, but opening to me more than Arabian paradises!) and, moreover, that by his testamentary beneficence I came into possession of the only landed property which I could ever call my own—situate near the road-way village of pleasant Puckeridge, in Hertfordshire. When I journeyed down to take possession, and planted foot on my own ground, the stately habits of the donor descended upon me, and I strode (shall I confess the vanity?) with larger paces over my allotment of three-quarters of an acre, with its commodious mansion in the midst, with the feeling of an English freeholder that all betwixt sky and center was my own. The estate has

passed into more prudent hands, and nothing but an agrarian can restore it.

In those days were pit orders. Beshrew the uncomfortable manager who abolished them! with one of these we went. I remember the waiting at the door—not that which is left—but between that and an inner door in shelter—O when shall I be such an expectant again, with the cry of nonpareils, an indispensable play-house accompaniment in those days. As near as I can recollect, the fashionable pronunciation of the theatrical fruiteresses then was, “Chase some oranges, chase some numparels, chase a bill of the play”; chase *pro* chuse. But when we got in, and I beheld the green curtain that veiled a heaven to my imagination, which was soon to be disclosed—the breathless anticipations I endured! I had seen something like it in the plate prefixed to *Troilus and Cressida*, in Rowe’s Shakespeare—the tent scene with Diomede—and a sight of that plate can always bring back in a measure the feeling of that evening. The boxes at that time, full of well-dressed women of quality, projected over the pit; and the pilasters reaching down were adorned with a glistening substance (I know not what) under glass as it seemed), resembling a homely fancy—but I judged it to be sugar-candy—yet to my raised imagination, divested of its homelier qualities, it appeared a glorified candy! The orchestra lights at length rose, those “fair Auroras!” Once the bell sounded. It was to ring out yet once again—and, incapable of the anticipation, I reposed my shut eyes in a sort of resignation upon the maternal lap. It

rang the second time. The curtain drew up—I was not past six years old, and the play was Artaxerxes!

I had dabbled a little in the Universal History—the ancient part of it—and here was the court of Persia. It was being admitted to a sight of the past. I took no proper interest in the action going on, for I understood not its import—but I heard the word Darius, and I was in the midst of Daniel. All feeling was absorbed in vision. Gorgeous vests, gardens, palaces, princesses, passed before me. I knew not players. I was in Persepolis for the time, and the burning idol of their devotion almost converted me into a worshiper. I was awe-struck, and believed those significations to be something more than elemental fires. It was all enchantment and a dream. No such pleasure has since visited me but in dreams. Harlequin's invasion followed; where, I remember, the transformation of the magistrates into reverend beldams seemed to me a piece of grave historic justice, and the tailor carrying his own head to be as sober a verity as the legend of St. Denys.

The next play to which I was taken was the Lady of the Manor, of which, with the exception of some scenery, very faint traces are left in my memory. It was followed by a pantomime, called Lun's Ghost—a satiric touch, I apprehend, upon Rich, not long since dead—but to my apprehension (too sincere for satire), Lun was as remote a piece of antiquity as Lud, the father of a line of Harlequins, transmitting his dagger of lath (the wooden sceptre) through countless ages. I saw the primeval Motley come from his silent tomb in a ghastly vest of white

patchwork, like the apparition of a dead rainbow. So Harlequins (thought I) look when they are dead.

My third play followed in quick succession. It was the Way of the World. I think I must have sat at it as grave as a judge; for I remember the hysteric affectations of good Lady Wishfort affected me like some solemn tragic passion. Robinson Crusoe followed; in which Crusoe, man Friday, and the parrot, were as good and authentic as in the story. The clownery and pantaloonery of these pantomimes have clean passed out of my head. I believe I no more laughed at them than at the same age I should have been disposed to laugh at the grotesque Gothic heads (seeming to me then replete with devout meaning) that gape and grin in stone around the inside of the old Round Church (my church) of the Templars.

I saw these plays in the season 1781-2, when I was from six to seven years old. After the intervention of six or seven other years (for at school all play-going was inhibited) I again entered the doors of a theater. That old Artaxerxes evening had never done ringing in my fancy. I expected the same feelings to come again with the same occasion. But we differ from ourselves less at sixty and sixteen than the latter does from six. In that interval what had I not lost! At the first period I knew nothing, understood nothing, discriminated nothing. I felt all, loved all, wondered all—

Was nourished, I could not tell how—
I had left the temple a devotee, and was returned a rationalist. The same things were there materially;

but the emblem, the reference, was gone. The green curtain was no longer a veil, drawn between two worlds, the unfolding of which was to bring back past ages, to present a "royal ghost," but a certain quantity of green baize, which was to separate the audience for a given time from certain of their fellow men who were to come forward and pretend those parts. The lights—the orchestra lights—came up a clumsy machinery. The first ring, and the second ring, was now but a trick of the prompter's bell, which had been, like the note of the cuckoo, a phantom of a voice, no hand seen or guessed at which ministered to its warning. The actors were men and women painted. I thought the fault was in them; but it was in myself, and the alteration which those many centuries—of six short twelvemonths—had wrought in me. Perhaps it was fortune for me that the play of the evening was but an indifferent comedy, as it gave me time to crop some unreasonable expectations, which might have interfered with the genuine emotions with which I was soon after enabled to enter upon the first appearance to me of Mrs. Siddons in *Isabella*. Comparison and retrospection soon yielded to the present attraction of the scene; and the theater became to me, upon a new stock, the most delightful of recreations.

AMICUS REDIVIVUS.

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?

I do not know when I have experienced a stranger sensation than on seeing my old friend, G. D., who had been paying me a morning visit, a few Sundays back, at my cottage at Islington, upon taking leave, instead of turning down the right-hand path by which he had entered—with staff in hand, and at noonday, deliberately march right forward into the midst of the stream that runs by us and totally disappear.

A spectacle like this at dusk would have been appalling enough; but in the broad, open daylight, to witness such an unreserved motion toward self-destruction in a valued friend took from me all power of speculation.

How I found my feet I know not. Consciousness was quite gone. Some spirit, not my own, whirled me to the spot. I remember nothing but the silvery apparition of a good white head emerging; nigh with a staff (the hand unseen that wielded it) pointed upward, as feeling for the skies. In a moment (if time was in that time) he was on my shoulders, and I—freighted with a load more precious than his who bore Anchises.

And here I cannot but do justice to the officious zeal of sundry passers-by, who, albeit arriving a little too late to participate in the honors of the res-

cue, in philanthropic shoals came thronging to communicate their advice as to the recovery; prescribing variously the application, or non-application of salt, etc., to the person of the patient. Life, meantime, was ebbing fast away, amid the stifle of conflicting judgments, when one, more sagacious than the rest, by a bright thought, proposed sending for the Doctor. Trite as the counsel was, and impossible, as one should think, to be missed on—shall I confess?—in this emergency it was to me as if an Angel had spoken. Great previous exertions—and mine had not been inconsiderable—are commonly followed by a debility of purpose. This was a moment of irresolution.

Monoculus—for so, in default of catching his true name, I choose to designate the medical gentleman who now appeared—is a grave, middle-aged person, who without having studied at the college, or truckled to the pedantry of a diploma, hath employed a great portion of his valuable time in experimental processes upon the bodies of unfortunate fellow creatures, in whom the vital spark, to mere vulgar thinking, would seem extinct and lost forever. He omitteth no occasion of intruding his services, from a case of common surfeit suffocation to the ignobler obstructions, sometimes induced by a too willful application of the plant *cannabis* outwardly. But though he declineth not altogether these drier extinctions, his occupation tendeth, for the most part, to water-practice; for the convenience of which he has judiciously fixed his quarters near the grand repository of the stream mentioned, where

day and night from his little watch-tower at the Middleton's Head, he listeneth to detect the wrecks of drowned mortality—partly, as he saith, to be upon the spot—and partly, because the liquids which he useth to prescribe to himself and his patients, on these distressing occasions, are ordinarily more conveniently to be found at these common hostelries than in the shops and phials of the apothecaries. His ear hath arrived to such finesse by practice that it is reported he can distinguish a plunge at half a furlong distance, and can tell if it be casual or deliberate. He weareth a medal, suspended over a suit, originally of a sad brown, but which, by time and frequency of nightly divings, has been dinged into a true professionable sable. He passeth by the name of Doctor, and is remarkable for wanting his left eye. His remedy—after a sufficient application of warm blankets, friction, etc., is a simple tumbler, or more, or the purest Cognac, with water, made as hot as the convalescent can bear it. Where he findeth, as in the case of my friend, a squeamish subject, he condescendeth to be a taster; and sheweth, by his own example, the innocuous nature of the prescription. Nothing can be more kind or encouraging than this procedure. It addeth confidence to the patient, to see his medical adviser go hand in hand with himself in the remedy. When the doctor swalloweth his own draught, what peevish invalid can refuse to pledge him in the potion? In fine, Monoculus is a humane, sensible man, who, for a slender pittance, scarce enough to sustain life, is content to wear it out in the endeavour to save the lives

of others—his pretensions so moderate, that with difficulty I could press a crown upon him, for the price of restoring the existence of such an invaluable creature to society as G. D.

It was pleasant to observe the effect of the subsiding alarm upon the nerves of the dear absentee. It seemed to have given a shake to memory, calling up notice after notice of all the providential deliverances he had experienced in the course of his long and innocent life. Sitting up on my couch—my couch which, naked and void of furniture hitherto, for the salutary repose which it administered, shall be honoured with costly valance, at some price, and henceforth be a state-bed at Colebrook—he discoursed of marvelous escapes—by carelessness of nurses; by pails of gelid, and kettles of the boiling element, in infancy; by orchard pranks, and snapping twigs, in school-boy frolics; by descent of tiles at Trumpington; and of heavier tomes at Pembroke; by studious watchings, inducing frightful vigilance; by want, and the fear of want, and all the sore throbbings of the learned head. Anon, he would burst out into little fragments of chanting, of songs, long ago, ends of deliverance hymns, not remembered before since childhood, but coming up now, when his heart was made as tender as a child's—for the *tremor cordis*, in the retrospect of a recent deliverance, as in the case of impending danger, acting upon an innocent heart, will produce a self-tenderness, which we should do ill to christen cowardice; and Shakespeare, in the latter crisis, has made his

good Sir Hugh to remember the sitting by Babylon, and to mutter of shallow rivers.

Waters of Sir Hugh Middleton, what a spark you were like to have extinguished forever! Your salubrious streams to this city, for now near two centuries, would hardly have atoned for what you were in a moment washing away. Mockery of a river—liquid artifice—wreathed conduit! henceforth rank with canals and sluggish aqueducts. Was it for this that, smit in boyhood with the explorations of that Abyssinian traveller, I paced the vales of Amwell to explore your tributary springs, to trace your salutary waters sparkling through green Hertfordshire, and cultured Enfield parks? Ye have no swans, no Naiads, no river god—or did the benevolent hoary aspect of my friend tempt ye to suck him in, that ye also might have the tutelary genius of your waters?

Had he been drowned in Cam, there would have been some consonancy in it; but what willows had ye to wave and rustle over his moist sepulture? or having no *name*, besides that unmeaning assumption of *eternal novelty*, did ye think to get one by the noble prize, and henceforth to be termed the stream Dyerian?

And could such spacious virtue find a grave
Beneath the imposthumed bubble of a wave?

I protest, George, you shall not venture out again—no, not by daylight—without a sufficient pair of spectacles—in your musing moods especially. Your absence of mind we have borne, till your presence

of body came to be called in question by it. You shall not go wandering into Euripus with Aristotle, if we can help it. Fie, man, to turn dipper at your years, after your many tracts in favor of sprinkling only!

I have nothing but water in my head o' nights since this frightful accident. Sometimes I am with Clarence in his dream. At others, I behold Christian beginning to sink, and crying out to his good brother Hopeful (that is, to me), "I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head, all the waves go over me. Selah." Then I have before me Palinurus, just letting go the steerage. I cry out too late to save. Next follow a mournful procession, *suicidal faces*, saved against their will from drowning; dolefully trailing a length of reluctant gratefulness, with ropy weeds pendant from locks of watchet hue; constrained Lazari, Pluto's half-subjects, stolen fees from the grave, bilking Charon of his fare. At their head Arion—or is it G. D.?—in his singing garments marcheth singly, with harp in hand, and votive garland, which Machaon (or Dr. Hawes) snatcheth straight, intending to suspend it to the stern God of Sea. Then follow dismal streams of Lethe, in which the half-drenched on earth are constrained to drown downright, by wharfs where Ophelia twicts acts her muddy death.

And, doubtless, there is some notice of that invisible world when one of us approacheth (as my friend did so lately) to their inexorable precincts. When a soul knocks once, twice, at Death's door, the sensation aroused within the palace must be

considerable; and the grim Feature, by modern science so often dispossessed of his prey, must have learned by this time to pity Tantalus.

A pulse assuredly was felt along the line of the Elysian shades, when the near arrival of G. D. was announced by equivocal indications. From their seats of Asphodel arose the gentler and the graver ghosts—poet, or historian—of Grecian or of Roman lore—to crown with unfading chaplets the half-finished love-labors of their unwearied scholiast. Him Markland expected, him Tyrwhitt hoped to encounter, him the sweet lyrist of Peter House, whom he had barely seen upon earth,* with newest airs prepared to greet —; and patron of the gentle Christ's boy, who should have been his patron through life—the mild Askew, with longing aspirations leaning foremost from his venerable Æsculapian chair, to welcome into that happy company the matured virtues of the man, whose tender scions in the boy he himself upon earth had so prophetically fed and watered.

**Graium tantum vidit.*

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG.

Mankind, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Chofang, literally the Cooks' Holiday. The manuscript goes on to say that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother), was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swineherd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-ho, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as youngsters of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian make-shift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East, from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tene-

ment, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labour of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odour assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from? not from the burnt cottage, he had smelt that smell before; indeed, this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young firebrand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life, indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted—*crackling!* Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retrib-

utory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hail-stones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure, which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued:

"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you! but you must be eating fire, and I know not what—what have you got there, I say?"

"O father, the pig, the pig! do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats."

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out, "Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig, father, only taste—O Lord!"—with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had

done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in turn tasted some of the flavour, which make what sour mouths he would for a pretence, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious), both father and son fairly set down to the mess, and never left off till they had dispatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbours would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastening his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Peking, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it; and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of

them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present—without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision: and when the court was dismissed, went privily and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his lordship's town-house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance-offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt*, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string or spit came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious, arts make their way among mankind.

Without placing too implicit faith in the account

above given, it must be agreed that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favor of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*, I will maintain it to be the most delicate—*princeps obsoniorum*.

I speak not of your grown porkers—things between pig and pork—those hobbledehoys—but a young and tender suckling—under a moon old—guiltless as yet of the sty, with no original speck of the *amor immunditiæ*, the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest—his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble and a grumble—the mild forerunner or *præludium* of a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled—but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavour comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous—O call it not fat! but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—fat cropped in the bud—taken in the shoot, in the first innocence, the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food, the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna, or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together

make but one ambrosian result or common substance.

Behold him while he is "doing"—it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth than a scorching heat, that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string! Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age! he had wept out his pretty eyes—radiant jellies—shooting stars.

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth! wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one 'he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal—wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation—from these sins he is happily snatched away—

Ere sin could blight or sorrow fade,
Death came with timely care—

his memory is odoriferous—no clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon—no coal-heaver bolteth him in reeking sausages—he hath a fair sepulchre in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure, and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of savors. Pine-apple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent; a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning, that really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause; too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and ex-coriateth the lips that approach her; like lovers' kisses she biteth; she is pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish,

but she stoppeth at the palate; she meddleth not with the appetite, and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton-chop.

Pig, let me speak his praise, is no less provocative of the appetite than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertwined, and not to be unravelled without hazard, he is good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbours' fare.

I am one of those who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes, and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. "Presents," I often say, "endear Absents." Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chickens (those "tame villatic fowl"), capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, "give everything." I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavours to extradomiciliate, or send out of the house slightly (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what) a blessing so particularly

adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate. It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat, or some nice thing, into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London Bridge) a gray-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt, at this time of day, that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, school-boy like, I made him a present of—the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but, before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I—I myself, and not another—would eat her nice cake, and what should I say to her the next time I saw her; how naughty I was to part with her pretty present! and the odour of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last; and I blamed my imper-

continent spirit of alms-giving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness; and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old gray impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipped to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have toward intenerating and dulcifying a substance, naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto.

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, "Whether, supposing that the flavour of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?" I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a few bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and

guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are—but consider, he is a weakling—a flower.

POOR RELATIONS.

A Poor Relation is the most irrelevant thing in nature, a piece of impertinent correspondence, an odious approximation, a haunting conscience, a preposterous shadow, lengthening in the noon-tide of our prosperity; an unwelcome remembrancer, a perpetually recurring mortification, a drain on your purse, a more intolerable dun upon your pride, a drawback upon success, a rebuke to your rising, a stain in your blood, a blot on your 'scutcheon, a rent in your garment, a death's head at your banquet, Agathocle's pot, a Mordecai in your gate, a Lazarus at your door, a lion in your path, a frog in your chamber, a fly in your ointment, a mote in your eye, a triumph to your enemy, an apology to your friends, the one thing not needful, the hail in harvest, the ounce of sour in a pound of sweet.

He is known by his knock. Your heart telleth you "That is Mr. —." A rap, between familiarity and respect; that demands, and at the same time seems to despair of, entertainment. He entereth smiling and embarrassed. He holdeth out his hand to you to shake, and draweth it back again. He casually looketh in about dinner-time—when the table is full. He offereth to go away, seeing you have company, but is induced to stay. He filleth a chair, and your

visitor's two children are accommodated at a side-table. He never cometh upon open days, when your wife says, with some complacency, "My dear, perhaps Mr. — will drop in today." He remembereth birthdays, and professeth he is fortunate to have stumbled upon one. He declareth against fish, the turbot being small, yet suffereth himself to be importuned into a slice against his first resolution. He sticketh by the port, yet he will be prevailed upon to empty the remainder glass of claret, if a stranger press it upon him. He is a puzzle to the servants, who are fearful of being too obsequious, or not civil enough, to him. The guests think "they have seen him before." Every one speculateth upon his condition; and the most part take him to be a tide-waiter. He calleth you by your Christian name to imply that his other is the same with your own. He is too familiar by half, yet you wish he had less diffidence. With half his familiarity he might pass for a casual dependent; with more boldness, he would be in no danger of being taken for what he is. He is too humble for a friend, yet taketh on him more state than befits a client. He is a worse guest than a country tenant, inasmuch as he bringeth up no rent, yet 'tis odds, from his garb and demeanour, that your guests take him for one. He is asked to make one at the whist table; refuseth on the score of poverty, and resents being left out. When the company breaks up, he proffereth to go for a coach, and lets the servant go. He recollects your grandfather, and will thrust in some mean and quite unimportant anecdote of the family. He knew it

when it was not quite so flourishing as "he is blest in seeing it now." He reviveth past situations, to institute what he calleth favourable comparisons. With a reflecting sort of congratulation he will inquire the price of your furniture, and insults you with a special commendation of your window-curtains. He is of opinion that the urn is the more elegant shape; but, after all, there was something more comfortable about the old tea-kettle, which you must remember. He dare say you must find a great convenience in having a carriage of your own, and appealeth to your lady if it is not so. Inquireth if you have had your arms done on vellum yet; and did not know, till lately, that such-and-such had been the crest of the family. His memory is unseasonable; his compliments perverse; his talk a trouble; his stay pertinacious; and when he goeth away, you dismiss his chair into a corner as precipitately as possible, and feel fairly rid of two nuisances.

There is a worse evil under the sun, and that is a female poor relation. You may do something with the other; you may pass him off tolerably well; but your indigent she-relative is hopeless. "He is an old humorist," you may say, "and affects to go threadbare. His circumstances are better than folks would take them to be. You are fond of having a character at your table, and truly he is one." But in the indications of female poverty there can be no disguise. No woman dresses below herself from caprice. The truth must out without shuffling. "She is plainly related to the L——'s; or what does

she at their house?" She is, in all probability, your wife's cousin. Nine times out of ten, at least, this is the case. Her garb is something between a gentlewoman and a beggar, yet the former evidently predominates. She is most provokingly humble, and ostentatiously sensible to her inferiority. He may require to be repressed sometimes—*aliquando sufflaminandus erat*—but there is no raising her. You send her soup at dinner, and she begs to be helped—after the gentlemen. Mr. — requests the honour of taking wine with her; she hesitates between Port and Madeira, and chooses the former because he does. She calls the servant *Sir*; and insists on not troubling him to hold her plate. The housekeeper patronizes her. The children's governess takes upon her to correct her, when she has mistaken the piano for a harpsichord.

Richard Amlet, Esq., in the play, is a notable instance of the disadvantages to which this chimerical notion of *affinity constituting a claim to acquaintance*, may subject the spirit of a gentleman. A little foolish blood is all that is between him and the lady with a great estate. His stars are perpetually crossed by the malignant maternity of an old woman, who persists in calling him "her son Dick." But she has wherewithal in the end to recompense his indignities, and float him again upon the brilliant surface, under which it had been her seeming business and pleasure all along to sink him. All men, besides, are not of Dick's temperament. I knew an Amlet in real life, who, wanting Dick's buoyancy, sank indeed. Poor W—— was of my own

standing at Christ's, a fine classic, and a youth of promise. If he had a blemish, it was too much pride; but its quality was inoffensive; it was not of that sort which hardens the heart, and serves to keep inferiors at a distance; it only sought to ward off derogation from itself. It was the principle of self-respect carried as far as it could go, without infringing upon that respect which he would have every one else equally maintain for himself. He would have you to think alike with him on this topic. Many a quarrel have I had with him, when we were rather older boys, and our tallness made us more obnoxious to observation in the blue clothes, because I would not tread the alleys and blind ways of the town with him to elude notice, when we have been out together on a holiday in the streets of this sneering and prying metropolis. W—— went, sore with these notions, to Oxford, where the dignity and sweetness of a scholar's life, meeting with the alloy of a humble introduction, wrought in him a passionate devotion to the place, with a profound aversion from the society. The servitor's gown (worse than his school array) clung to him with Nessian venom. He thought himself ridiculous in a garb, under which Latimer must have walked erect, and in which Hooker, in his young days, possibly flaunted in a vein of no discommendable vanity. In the depth of college shades, or in his lonely chamber, the poor student shrunk from observation. He found shelter among books, which insult not; and studies, that ask no questions of a youth's finances. He was lord of

his library, and seldom cared for looking out beyond his domains. The healing influence of studious pursuits was upon him to soothe and to abstract. He was almost a healthy man, when the waywardness of his fate broke out against him with a second and worse malignity. The father of W—— had hitherto exercised the humble profession of house-painter, at N——, near Oxford. A supposed interest with some of the heads of colleges had now induced him to take up his abode in that city, with the hope of being employed upon some public works which were talked of. From that moment I read in the countenance of the young man the determination which at length tore him from academical pursuits for ever. To a person unacquainted with our universities, the distance between the gownsmen and the townsmen, as they are called—the trading part of the latter especially—is carried to an excess that would appear harsh and incredible. The temperament of W——'s father was diametrically the reverse of his own. Old W—— was a little, busy, cringing tradesman, who, with his son upon his arm, would stand bowing and scraping, cap in hand, to anything that wore the semblance of a gown—insensible to the winks and opener remonstrances of the young man, to whose chamber-fellow, or equal in standing, perhaps, he was thus obsequiously and gratuitously ducking. Such a state of things could not last. W—— must change the air of Oxford, or be suffocated. He chose the former; and let the sturdy moralist, who strains the point of the filial duties as high as they can bear, censure the

dereliction; he cannot estimate the struggle. I stood with W——, the last afternoon I ever saw him, under the eaves of his paternal dwelling. It was in the fine lane leading from the High Street to the back of —— college, where W—— kept his rooms. He seemed thoughtful and more reconciled. I ventured to rally him—finding him in a better mood—upon a representation of the Artist Evangelist, which the old man, whose affairs were beginning to flourish, had caused to be set up in a splendid sort of frame over his really handsome shop, either as a token of prosperity or badge of gratitude to his saint. W—— looked up at the Luke, and, like Satan, “knew his mounted sign—and fled.” A letter on his father’s table, the next morning, announced that he had accepted a commission in a regiment about to embark for Portugal. He was among the first who perished before the walls of St. Sebastian.

I do not know how, upon a subject which I began with treating half seriously, I should have fallen upon a recital so eminently painful; but this theme of poor relationship is replete with so much matter for tragic as well as comic associations, that it is difficult to keep the account distinct without blending. The earliest impressions which I received on this matter are certainly not attended with anything painful, or very humiliating, in the recalling. At my father’s table (no very splendid one) was to be found, every Saturday, the mysterious figure of an aged gentleman, clothed in neat black, of a sad yet comely appearance. His deportment was of the

essence of gravity; his words few or none; and I was not to make a noise in his presence. I had little inclination to have done so, for my cue was to admire in silence. A particular elbow-chair was appropriated to him, which was in no case to be violated. A peculiar sort of sweet pudding, which appeared on no other occasion, distinguished the days of his coming. I used to think him a prodigiously rich man. All I could make out of him was, that he and my father had been school-fellows, a world ago, at Lincoln, and that he came from the Mint. The Mint I knew to be a place where all the money was coined—and I thought he was the owner of all that money. Awful ideas of the Tower twined themselves about his presence. He seemed above human infirmities and passions. A sort of melancholy grandeur invested him. From some inexplicable doom I fancied him obliged to go about in an eternal suit of mourning; a captive—a stately being let out of the Tower on Saturdays. Often have I wondered at the temerity of my father, who, in spite of an habitual general respect which we all in common manifested toward him, would venture now and then to stand up against him in some argument touching their youthful days. The houses of the ancient city of Lincoln are divided (as most of my readers know) between the dwellers on the hill and in the valley. This marked distinction formed an obvious division between the boys who lived above (however brought together in a common school) and the boys whose paternal residence was on the plain; a sufficient cause of hostility in the

code of these young Grotiuses. My father had been a leading Mountaineer; and would still maintain the general superiority in skill and hardihood of the *Above Boys* (his own faction) over the *Below Boys* (so were they called), of which party his contemporary had been a chieftain. Many and hot were the skirmishes on this topic—the only one upon which the old gentleman was ever brought out—and bad blood bred; even sometimes almost to the recommencement (so I expected) of actual hostilities. But my father, who scorned to insist upon advantages, generally contrived to turn the conversation upon some adroit by-commendation of the old Minister; in the general preference of which, before all other cathedrals in the island, the dweller on the hill, and the plain-born, could meet on a conciliating level, and lay down their less important differences. Once only I saw the old gentleman really ruffled, and I remember with anguish the thought that came over me: “Perhaps he will never come here again.” He had been pressed to take another plate of the viand, which I have already mentioned as the indispensable concomitant of his visits. He had refused with a resistance amounting to rigor, when my aunt, an old Lincolnian, but who had something of this, in common with my cousin Bridget, that she would sometimes press civility out of season, uttered the following memorable application—“Do take another slice, Mr. Billet, for you do not get pudding every day.” The old gentleman said nothing at the time, but he took occasion in the course of the evening, when some argument

had intervened between them, to utter with an emphasis which chilled the company, and which chills me now as I write it—"Woman, you are superannuated!" John Billet did not survive long after the digesting of this affront; but he survived long enough to assure me that peace was actually restored; and, if I remember aright, another pudding was discreetly substituted in the place of that which had occasioned the offense. He died at the Mint (anno 1781) where he had long held what he accounted a comfortable independence; and with five pounds, fourteen shillings, and a penny, which were found in his escritoir after his decease, left the world, blessing God that he had enough to bury him, and that he had never been obliged to any man for a sixpence. This was—a Poor Relation.

MRS. BATTLE'S OPINIONS ON WHIST.

"A clear fire, a clean hearth,* and a rigour of the game." This was the celebrated *wish* of old Sarah Battle (now with God), who, next to her devotions, loved a good game of whist. She was none of your lukewarm gamesters, your half-and-half players who have no objection to take a hand, if you want one to make up a rubber, who affirm that they have no pleasure in winning; that they like to win one game and lose another; that they can while away an hour very agreeably at a card-table, but are indifferent whether they play or no; and will desire an adversary, who has slipped a wrong card, to take it up and play another.† These insufferable triflers are the curse of a table. One of these flies will spoil a whole pot. Of such it may be said that they do not play at cards, but only play at playing at them.

Sarah Battle was none of that breed. She detested them as I do, from her heart and soul, and would not, save upon a striking emergency, willingly seat herself at the same table with them. She loved a thorough-paced partner, a determined enemy. She took and gave no concessions. She hated favors. She never made a revoke, nor ever passed it over in her adversary without exacting the utmost forfeiture.

*This was before the introduction of rugs, reader. You must remember the intolerable crash of the unswept cinders betwixt your foot and the marble.

†As if a sportsman should tell you he liked to kill a fox one day and lose him the next.

She fought a good fight: cut and thrust. She held not her good sword (her cards) "like a dancer." She sat bolt upright; and neither showed you her cards, nor desired to see yours. All people have their blind side—their superstitions; and I have heard her declare under the rose, that hearts was her favourite suit.

I never in my life—and I knew Sarah Battle many of the best years of it—saw her take out her snuff-box when it was her turn to play; or snuff a candle in the middle of a game; or ring for a servant, till it was fairly over. She never introduced, or connived at miscellaneous conversation during its process. As she emphatically observed, cards were cards; and if I ever saw unmingled distaste in her fine last-century countenance, it was at the airs of a young gentleman of a literary turn, who had been with difficulty persuaded to take a hand; and who, in his excess of candour, declared that he thought there was no harm in unbending the mind now and then, after serious studies in recreations of that kind! She could not bear to have her noble occupation, to which she wound up her faculties, considered in that light. It was her business, her duty, the thing she came into the world to do, and she did it. She unbent her mind afterward—over a book.

Pope was her favourite author: his Rape of the Lock her favourite work. She once did me the favour to play over with me (with the cards) his celebrated game of Omber in that poem; and to explain to me how far it agreed with, and in what points it would be found to differ from tradrille. Her illustrations

were opposite and poignant; and I had the pleasure of sending the substance of them to Mr. Bowles; but I suppose they came too late to be inserted among his ingenious notes upon that author.

Quadrille, she has often told me, was her first love; but whist had engaged her maturer esteem. The former, she said, was showy and specious, and likely to allure young persons. The uncertainty and quick shifting of partners—a thing which the constancy of whist abhors; the dazzling supremacy and regal investiture of Spadille—absurd, as she justly observed, in the pure aristocracy of whist, where his crown and garter give him no proper power above his brother-nobility of the aces; the giddy; vanity, so taking to the inexperienced, of playing alone above all, the overpowering attractions of a *Sans Prendre Vole*, to the triumph of which there is certainly nothing parallel or approaching, in the contingencies of whist; all these, she would say, make quadrille a game of captivation to the young and enthusiastic. But whist was the *solider* game: that was her word. It was a long meal; not like quadrille, a feast of snatches. One or two rubbers might co-extend in duration with an evening. They gave time to form rooted friendships, to cultivate steady enmities. She despised the chance-started, capricious, and ever-fluctuating alliances of the other. The skirmishes of quadrille, she would say, reminded her of the petty ephemeral embroilments of the little Italian states, depicted by Machiavel: perpetually changing postures and connections; bitter foes today, sugared darlings tomorrow; kissing and

scratching in a breath; but the wars of whist were comparable to the long, steady, deep-rooted, national antipathies of the great French and English nations.

A grave simplicity was what she chiefly admired in her favourite game. There was nothing silly in it, like the nob in cribbage—nothing superfluous. No *flushes*—that most irrational of all pleas that a reasonable being can set up: that any one should claim four by virtue of holding cards of the same mark and colour, without reference to the playing of the game, or the individual worth or pretensions of the cards themselves! She held this to be a solecism; as pitiful an ambition at cards as alliteration is in authorship. She despised superficiality, and looked deeper than the color of things. Suits were soldiers, she would say, and must have a uniformity of array to distinguish them; but what should we say to a foolish squire, who should claim a merit from dressing up his tenantry in red jackets, that never were to be marshalled—never to take the field! She even wished that whist were more simple than it is; and, in my mind, would have stripped it of some appendages, which, in the state of human frailty, may be venially, and even commendably, allowed of. She saw no reason for the deciding of the trump by the turn of the card. Why not one suit always trumps? Why two colours, when the mark of the suit would have sufficiently distinguished them without it?

“But the eye, my dear madam, is agreeably refreshed with the variety. Man is not a creature of pure reason—he must have his senses delightfully appealed to. We see it in Roman Catholic coun-

tries, where the music and the paintings draw in many to worship, whom your Quaker spirit of unsensualizing would have kept out. You yourself have a pretty collection of paintings—but confess to me, whether, walking in your gallery at Sandham, among those clear Vandykes, or among the Paul Potters in the ante-room, you ever felt your bosom glow with an elegant delight at all comparable to *that* you have it in your power to experience most evenings over a well-arranged assortment of the court-cards? the pretty antic habits, like heralds in a procession, the gay triumph-assuring scarlets, the contrasting deadly-killing sables, the “hoary majesty of spades”—Pam in all his glory!

“All these might be dispensed with; and with their naked names upon the drab pasteboard, the game might go on very well, pictureless; but the *beauty* of cards would be extinguished forever. Stripped of all that is imaginative in them, they must degenerate into mere gambling. Imagine a dull deal board, or drum-head, to spread them on, instead of that nice verdant carpet (next to nature’s), fittest arena for those courtly combatants to play their gallant jousts and turneys in! Exchange those delicately-turned ivory markers—(work of Chinese artist, unconscious of their symbol, or as profanely slighting their true application as the **arrantest** Ephesian journeyman that turned out those little shrines for the goddess)—exchange them for little bits of leather (our ancestors’ money), or chalk and a slate!”

The old lady, with a smile, confessed the soundness

of my logic; and to her approbation of my arguments on her favourite topic that evening I have always fancied myself indebted for the legacy of a curious cribbage-board, made of the finest Sienna marble, which her maternal uncle (old Walter Plumer, whom I have elsewhere celebrated) brought with him from Florence; this, and a trifle of five hundred pounds, came to me at her death.

The former bequest (which I do not least value) I have kept with religious care, though she herself, to confess the truth, was never greatly taken with cribbage. It was an essentially vulgar game, I have heard her say, disputing with her uncle, who was very partial to it. She could never heartily bring her mouth to pronounce "*Go*," or "*That's a go*." She called it an ungrammatical game. The pegging teased her. I once knew her to forfeit a rubber (a five-dollar stake) because she would not take advantage of the turn-up knave, which would have given it her, but which she must have claimed by the disgraceful tenure of declaring "*two for his heels*." There is something extremely genteel in this sort of self-denial. Sarah Battle was a gentlewoman born.

Piquet she held the best game at the cards for two persons, though she would ridicule the pedantry of the terms, such as pique, repique, the capot—they savored (she thought) of affectation. But games for two, or even three, she never greatly cared for. She loved the quadrate, or square. She would argue thus: Cards are warfare: the ends are gain, with glory. But cards are war, in dis-

guise of a sport: when single adversaries encounter, the ends proposed are too palpable. By themselves, it is too close a fight; with spectators, it is not much bettered. No looker-on can be interested, except for a bet, and then it is a mere affair of money; he cares not for your luck *sympathetically*, or for your play. Three are still worse; a mere naked war of every man against every man, as in cribbage, without league or alliance; or a rotation of petty and contradictory interests, a succession of heartless leagues, and not much more hearty infractions of them, as in tradrille. But in square games (*she meant whist*), all that is possible to be attained in card-playing is accomplished. There are the incentives of profit with honour, common to every species—though the *latter* can be but very imperfectly enjoyed in those other games, where the spectator is only feebly a participator. But the parties in whist are spectators and principals too. They are a theater to themselves, and a looker-on is not wanted. He is rather worse than nothing, and an impertinence. Whist abhors neutrality, or interests beyond its sphere. You glory in some surprising stroke of skill or fortune, not because a cold—or even an interested—bystander witnesses it, but because your *partner* sympathizes in the contingency. You win for two. You triumph for two. Two are exalted. Two again are mortified; which divides their disgrace, as the conjunction doubles (by taking off the invidiousness) your glories. Two losing to two are better reconciled than one to one in that close butchery. The hostile feeling is weakened by

multiplying the channels. War becomes a civil game. By such reasonings as these the old lady was accustomed to defend her favorite pastime.

No inducement could ever prevail upon her to play at any game, where chance entered into the composition, *for nothing*. Chance, she would argue—and here again admire the subtlety of her conclusion—chance is nothing, but where something else depends upon it. It is obvious that cannot be *glory*. What rational cause of exultation could it give to a man to turn up size ace a hundred times together by himself? or before spectators, where no stake was depending? Make a lottery of a hundred thousand tickets with but one fortunate number—and what possible principle of our nature, except stupid wonderment, could it gratify to gain that number as many times successively without a prize? Therefore she disliked the mixture of chance in backgammon, where it was not played for money. She called it foolish, and those people idiots, who were taken with a lucky hit under such circumstances. Games of pure skill were as little to her fancy. Played for a stake, they were a mere system of overreaching. Played for glory, they were a mere setting of one man's wit, his memory, or combination-faculty rather, against another's; like a mock-engagement at a review, bloodless and profitless. She could not conceive a *game* wanting the spritely infusion of chance, the handsome excuses of good fortune. Two people playing at chess in a corner of a room whilst whist was stirring in the center, would inspire her with insufferable horror and

ennui. Those well-cut similitudes of Castles and Knights, the *imagery* of the board, she would argue (and I think in this case justly), were entirely misplaced and senseless. Those hard-head contests can in no instance ally with the fancy. They reject form and colour. A pencil and dry slate (she used to say) were the proper arena for such combatants.

To those puny objectors against cards, as nurturing the bad passions, she would retort, that man is a gaming animal. He must be always trying to get the better in something or other: that this passion can scarcely be more safely expended than upon a game at cards: that cards are a temporary illusion; in truth, a mere drama; for we do but *play* at being mightily concerned, where a few idle shillings are at stake, yet, during the illusion, we *are* as mightily concerned as those whose stake is crowns and kingdoms. They are a sort of dream-fighting; much ado, great battling, and little bloodshed; mighty means for disproportioned ends: quite as diverting, and a great deal more innoxious, than many of those more serious *games* of life, which men play without esteeming them to be such.

With great deference to the old lady's judgment in these matters, I think I have experienced some moments in my life when playing at cards *for nothing* has even been agreeable. When I am in sickness, or not in the best spirits, I sometimes call for the cards, and play a game at piquet *for love* with my cousin Bridget—Bridget Elia.

I grant there is something sneaking in it; but

with a toothache, or a sprained ankle, when you are subdued and humble, you are glad to put up with an inferior spring of action.

There is such a thing in nature, I am convinced, as *sick whist*.

I grant it is not the highest style of man—I deprecate the manes of Sarah Battle—she lives not, alas! to whom I should apologize.

At such times, those *terms* which my old friend objected to, come in as something admissible. I love to get a tierce or a quatorze, though they mean nothing. I am subdued to an inferior interest. Those shadows of winning amuse me.

That last game I had with my sweet cousin (I capotted her—dare I tell thee, how foolish I am?), I wished it might have lasted forever, though we gained nothing, and lost nothing, though it was a mere shade of play: I would be content to go on in that idle folly forever. The pipkin should be ever boiling, that was to prepare the gentle lenitive to my foot, which Bridget was doomed to apply after the game was over: and, as I do not much relish appliances, there it should ever bubble. Bridget and I should be ever playing.

OLD CHINA.

I have an almost feminine partiality for old china. When I go to see any great house, I inquire for the china closet, and next for the picture gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then—why should I now have?—to those little, lawless, azure-tintured grotesques, that, under the notion of men and women, float about, uncircumscribed by any element, in that world before perspective—a china tea cup.

I like to see my old friends, whom distance cannot diminish, figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on *terra firma* still—for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue, which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, had made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin, handing tea to a lady from a salver—two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect! And here the same lady, or another—for likeness is identity on tea cups—is stepping into a little fairy boat,

moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead—a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream!

Farther on—if far and near can be predicated of their world—see horses, trees, pagodas, dancing the hays.

Here—a cow and rabbit couchant, and co-extensive—so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay.

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening, over our Hyson (which we are old-fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon), some of these *speciosa miracula* upon a set of extraordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we are now for the first time using; and could not help remarking how favorable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort—when a passing sentiment seemed to overshadow the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.

“I wish the good old times would come again,” she said, “when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state,” so she was pleased to ramble on, “in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and,

O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!) we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

“Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all our friends cried shame upon you, it grew so threadbare—and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker’s in Covent Garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o’clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late—and when the old book-seller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedward) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating*, you called it)—and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till daybreak—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical—give you half the honest vanity with which you flaunted it about in that

overworn suit—your old carbeau—for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then—which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

“When you came home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Lionardo, which we christened the ‘Lady Blanch,’ when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money—and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi’s, and buy a wilderness of Lionardos. Yet do you?”

“Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter’s bar, and Waltham, when we had a holiday—holidays and all other fun are gone now we are rich—and the little handbasket in which I used to deposit our day’s fare of savory cold lamb and salad—and how you would pry about at noontide for some decent house, where we might go and produce our store—only paying for the ale that you must call for—and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a tablecloth—and wish for such another honest hostess as Izaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a fishing—and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly

upon us—but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall? Now, when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom, moreover, we *ride* part of the way, and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense, which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

“You are too proud to see a play anywhere now 'but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the *Battle of Hexham*, and the *Surrender of Calais*, and *Bannister* and *Mrs. Bland* in the *Children in the Wood*—when we squeezed out our shilling apiece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery—where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me—and more strongly I felt obligations to you for having brought me—and the pleasure was the better for a little shame—and when the curtain drew up, what care we for our place in the house or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with *Rosalind in Arden*, or with *Viola at the Court of Illyria*? You used to say that the gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially; that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going; that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on on the stage, because a word lost would have been a

chasm which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then, and I appeal to you whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in, indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases, was bad enough, but there was still a law of civility to women recognized to quite as great an extent as we ever found in other passages, and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat and the play afterward! Now we can only pay our money and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard, too, well enough then, but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

“There was pleasure in eating strawberries before they became quite common; in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear, to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now—that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is the very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat—when two people living together as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologizes, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves, in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now, what I

mean by the word, we never *do* make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

"I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet—and much ado we used to have every thirty-first night of December to account for our exceedings—many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much, or that we had not spent so much, or that it was impossible that we should spend so much next year, and still we found our slender capital decreasing; but then, betwixt ways and projects, and compromises of one sort or another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future, and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now), we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with 'lusty brimmers' (as we used to quote it out of *heartly, cheerful Mr. Cotton*, as you called him), we used to welcome in the 'coming guest.' Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year; no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us."

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of poor — hundred pounds a year. "It is true we were happier when we were poorer,

but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superflux into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power, those natural dilations of the youthful spirit, which circumstances can not straighten—with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary to youth, a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride where we formally walked: live better and lie softer—and shall be wise to do so—than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return, could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a day, could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them, could the good old one shilling gallery days return—they are dreams, my cousin, now—but could you and I at this moment—instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fireside, sitting on this luxurious sofa—be once more struggling up those inconvenient staircases, pushed about and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers—could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours, and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe*, which always followed, when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheer-

ful theater down beneath us—I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Cræsus had, or the great Jew R—— is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half-Madonna-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summer house.”

IMPERFECT SYMPATHIES.

I am of a constitution so general, that it consorts and sympathizeth with all things. I have no antipathy, or rather idiosyncrasy in anything. Those natural repugnancies do not touch me, nor do I behold with prejudice the French, Italian, Spaniard, or Dutch.—*Religio Medici*.

That the author of the *Religio Medici* mounted upon the airy stilts of abstraction, conversant about notional and conjectural essences; in whose categories of Being the possible took the upper hand of the actual; should have overlooked the impertinent individualities of such poor concretions as mankind, is not much to be admired. It is rather to be wondered at, that in the genus of animals he should have condescended to distinguish that species at all. For myself, earth-bound and fettered to the scene of my activities,

Standing on earth, not rapt above the sky.

I confess that I do feel the differences of mankind,

national or individual, to an unhealthy excess. I can look with no indifferent eye upon things or persons. Whatever is, is to me a matter of taste or distaste; or when once it becomes indifferent it begins to be disrelishing. I am, in plainer words, a bundle of prejudices, made up of likings and dislikings, the veriest thrall to sympathies, apathies, antipathies. In a certain sense, I hope it may be said of me that I am a lover of my species. I can feel for all indifferently, but I cannot feel toward all equally. The more purely English word that expresses sympathy, will better explain my meaning. I can be a friend to a worthy man, who upon another account cannot be my mate or *fellow*. I can not *like* all people alike.*

*I would be understood as confining myself to the subject of *imperfect sympathies*. To nations or classes of men there can be no direct antipathy. There may be individuals born and constellated so opposite to another individual nature that the same sphere cannot hold them. I have met with my moral antipodes, and can believe the story of two persons meeting (who never saw one another before in their lives) and instantly fighting.

—We by proof find there should be
 'Twixt man and man such an antipathy,
 That though he can show no just reason why
 For any former wrong or injury,
 Can neither find a blemish in his fame,
 Nor aught in face or feature justly blame,
 Can challenge or accuse him of no evil,
 Yet notwithstanding hates him as a devil.

The lines are from old Heywood's "Hierarchie of Angels," and he subjoins a curious story in confirmation of a Spaniard who attempted to assassinate a king Ferdinand of Spain, and being put to the rack could give no other reason for the deed but an inveterate antipathy which he had taken to the first sight of the king.

—The cause which to that act compell'd him
 Was, he ne'er loved him since he first beheld him.

I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair. They cannot like me—and in truth, I never knew one of that nation who attempted to do it. There is something more plain and ingenuous in their mode of proceeding. We know one another at first sight. There is an order of imperfect intellects (under which mine must be content to rank) which in its constitution is essentially anti-Caledonian. The owners of the sort of faculties I allude to, have minds rather suggestive than comprehensive. They have no pretences to much clearness or precision in their ideas, or in their manner of expressing them. Their intellectual wardrobe (to confess fairly) has few whole pieces in it. They are content with fragments and scattered pieces of Truth. She presents no full front to them—a feature or side-face at the most. Hints and glimpses, germs and crude essays at a system, is the utmost they pretend to. They beat up a little game peradventure—and leave it to knottier heads, more robust constitutions, to run it down. The light that lights them is not steady and polar, but mutable and shifting; waxing, and again waning. Their conversation is accordingly. They will throw out a random word in or out of season, and be content to let it pass for what it is worth. They cannot speak always as if they were upon their oath—but must be understood, speaking or writing, with some abatement. They seldom wait to mature a proposition, but e'en bring it to market in the green ear. They delight to impart their defective discoveries

as they arise, without waiting for their full development. They are no systematizers, and would but err more by attempting it. Their minds, as I said before, are suggestive merely. The brain of a true Caledonian (if I am not mistaken) is constituted upon quite a different plan. His Minerva is born in panoply. You are never admitted to see his ideas in their growth—if, indeed, they do grow, and are not rather put together upon principles of clock-work. You never catch his mind in an undress. He never hints or suggests anything, but unlades his stock of ideas in perfect order and completeness. He brings his total wealth into company, and gravely unpacks it. His riches are always about him. He never stoops to 'catch a glittering something in your presence to share it with you, before he quite knows whether it be true touch or not. You cannot cry *halves* to anything that he finds. He does not find, but bring. You never witness his first apprehension of a thing. His understanding is always at its meridian—you never see the first dawn, the early streaks. He has no falterings of self-suspicion. Surmises, guesses, misgivings, half-intuitions, semi-consciousness, partial illuminations, dim instincts, embryo conceptions, have no place in his brain or vocabulary. The twilight of dubiety never falls upon him. Is he orthodox—he has no doubts. Is he an infidel—he has none either. Between the affirmative and the negative there is no border-land with him. You cannot hover with him on the confines of truth, or wander in the maze of a probable argument. He always

keeps the path. You cannot make excursions with him—for he sets you right. His taste never fluctuates. His morality never abates. He cannot compromise, or understand middle actions. There can be but a right and a wrong. His conversation is as a book. His affirmations have the sanctity of an oath. You must speak upon the square with him. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. "A healthy book," said one of his countrymen to me, who had ventured to give that appellation to John Bunce, "Did I catch rightly what you said? I have heard of a man in health, and of a healthy state of body, but I do not see how that epithet can be properly applied to a book." Above all, you must beware of indirect expressions before a Caledonian. Clap an extinguisher on your irony, if you are unhappily blest with a vein of it. Remember you are upon your oath. I have a print of a graceful female after Leonardo da Vinci, which I was showing off to Mr. —. After he had examined it minutely, I ventured to ask him how he liked MY BEAUTY (a foolish name it goes by among my friends), when he very gravely assured me, that "he had considerable respect for my character and talents (so he was pleased to say), but had not given himself much thought about the degree of my personal pretensions." The misconception staggered me but did not seem much to disconcert him. Persons of this nation are particularly fond of affirming a truth—which nobody doubts. They do not so properly affirm as annunciate it. They do indeed appear to have such a love of truth (as if,

like virtue, it were valuable for itself) that all truth becomes equally valuable, whether the proposition that contains it be new or old, disputed, or such as is impossible to become a subject of disputation. I was present not long since at a party of North Britons, where a son of Burns was expected; and happened to drop a silly expression (in my South British way), that I wished it were the father instead of the son—when four of them started up at once to inform me, that “that was impossible, because he was dead.” An impracticable wish, it seems, was more than they could conceive. Swift has hit off this part of their character, namely their love of truth, in his biting way, but with an illiberality that necessarily confines the passage to the margin.* The tediousness of these people is certainly provoking. I wonder if they ever tire one another! In my early life I had a passionate fondness for the poetry of Burns. I have sometimes foolishly hoped to ingratiate myself with his countrymen by expressing it. But I have always found that a true Scot resents your admiration of his compatriot even more than he would your contempt of him. The latter he imputes to your “imperfect acquaintance with many of the words which

*There are some people who think they sufficiently acquit themselves, and entertain their company with relating facts of no consequence, not at all out of the road of such common incidents as happen every day; and this I have observed more frequently among the Scots than any other nation, who are very careful not to omit the minutest circumstances of time or place; which kind of discourse, if it were not a little relieved by the uncouth terms and phrases as well as accent and gesture peculiar to that country, would be hardly tolerable.—*Hints toward an Essay on Conversation.*

he uses;" and the same objection makes it a presumption in you to suppose that you can admire him. Thomson they seem to have forgotten. Smollett they have neither forgotten nor forgiven, for his delineation of Rory and his companion, upon their first introduction to our metropolis. Speak of Smollett as a great genius, and they will retort upon you Hume's History compared with *his* Continuation of it. What if the historian had continued Humphrey Clinker?

I have, in the abstract, no disrespect for Jews. They are a piece of stubborn antiquity, compared with which Stonehenge is in its nonage. They date beyond the pyramids. But I should not care to be in habits of familiar intercourse with any of that nation. I confess that I have not the nerves to enter their synagogues. Old prejudices cling about me. I cannot shake off the story of Hugh of Lincoln. Centuries of injury, contempt and hate, on the one side; of cloaked revenge, dissimulation and hate, on the other, between our and their fathers, must and ought to affect the blood of the children. I cannot believe it can run clear and kindly yet; or that a few fine words, such as candor, liberality, the light of a nineteenth century, can close up the breaches of so deadly a disunion. A Hebrew is nowhere congenial to me. He is least distasteful on 'Change, for the mercantile spirit levels all distinctions, as all are beauties in the dark. I boldly confess that I do not relish the approximation of Jew and Christian, which has become so fashionable. The reciprocal endearments have, to me,

something hypocritical and unnatural in them. I do not like to see the Church and Synagogue kissing and congeeing in awkward postures of an affected civility. If *they* are converted, why do they not come over to us altogether? Why keep up a form of separation, when the life of it is fled? If they can sit with us at table, why do they knock at our cookery? I do not understand these half convertites. Jews christianizing, Christians judaizing, puzzle me. I like fish or flesh. A moderate Jew is a more confounding piece of anomaly than a wet Quaker. The spirit of the synagogue is essentially *separative*. B—— would have been more in keeping if he had abided by the faith of his forefathers. There is a fine scorn in his face, which nature meant to be of—Christians. The Hebrew spirit is strong in him, in spite of his proselytism. He cannot conquer the Shibboleth. How it breaks out when he sings, “The Children of Israel passed through the Red Sea!” The auditors, for the moment, are as Egyptians to him, and he rides over our necks in triumph. There is no mistaking him. B—— has a strong expression of sense in his countenance, and it is confirmed by his singing. The foundation of his vocal excellence is sense. He sings with understanding, as Kemble delivered dialogue. He would sing the Commandments, and give an appropriate character to each prohibition. His nation, in general, have not oversensible countenances. How should they? but you seldom see a silly expression among them. Gain, and the pursuit of gain, sharpen a man’s visage. I never heard

of an idiot being born among them. Some admire the Jewish female-physiognomy. I admire it, but with trembling. Jael had those full dark inscrutable eyes.

In the negro countenance you will often meet with strong straits of benignity. I have felt yearnings of tenderness toward some of these faces—or rather masks—that have looked out kindly upon one in casual encounters in the streets and highways. I love what Fuller beautifully calls—these “images of God cut in ebony.” But I should not like to associate with them, to share my meals and my good nights with them—because they are black.

I love Quaker ways, and Quaker worship. I venerate the Quaker principles. It does me good for the rest of the day when I meet any of their people in my path. When I am ruffled or disturbed by any occurrence, the sight, or quiet voice of a Quaker, acts upon me as a ventilator, lightening the air, and taking off a load from the bosom. But I cannot like the Quakers (as Desdemona would say) “to live with them.” I am all over sophisticated—with humors, fancies, craving hourly sympathy. I must have books, theaters, chit-chats, scandal, jokes, ambiguities and a thousand whim-whams, which their simpler taste can do without. I should starve at their primitive banquet. My appetites are too high for the salads which (according to Evelyn) Eve dressed for the angel; my gusto too excited

To sit a guest with Daniel at his pulse.

The indirect answers which Quakers are often found to return to a question put to them may be

explained, I think, without the vulgar assumption, that they are more given to evasion and equivocating than other people. They naturally look to their words more carefully, and are more cautious of committing themselves. They have a peculiar character to keep up on this head. They stand in a manner upon their veracity. A Quaker is by law exempted from taking an oath. The custom of resorting to an oath in extreme cases, sanctified as it is by all religious antiquity, is apt (it must be confessed) to introduce into the laxer sort of minds the notion of two kinds of truth—the one applicable to the solemn affairs of justice, and the other to the common proceedings of daily intercourse. As truth bound upon the conscience by an oath can be but truth, so in the common affirmations of the shop and the marketplace a latitude is expected and conceded upon questions wanting this solemn covenant. Something less than truth satisfies. It is common to hear a person say, “You do not expect me to speak as if I were upon my oath.” Hence a great deal of incorrectness and inadvertency, short of falsehood, creeps into ordinary conversation; and a kind of secondary or laic-truth is tolerated, where clergy truth—oath-truth, by the nature of the circumstances—is not required. A Quaker knows none of this distinction. His simple affirmation being received upon the most sacred occasions, without any further test, stamps a value upon the words which he is to use upon the most indifferent topics of life. He looks to them, naturally, with more severity. You can have of him no more than his word. He knows, if he is caught

tripping in a casual expression, he forfeits, for himself at least, his claim to the invidious exemption. He knows that his syllables are weighed—and how far a consciousness of this particular watchfulness, exerted against a person, has a tendency to produce indirect answers, and a diverting of the question by honest means, might be illustrated, and the practice justified by a more sacred example than is proper to be adduced upon this occasion. The admirable presence of mind, which is notorious in Quakers upon all contingencies, might be traced to this imposed self-watchfulness, if it did not seem rather an humble and secular scion of that old stock of religious constancy, which never bent or faltered, in the Primitive Friends, or gave way to the winds of persecution, to the violence of judge or accuser, under trials and racking examinations. “You will never be the wiser, if I sit here answering your questions till midnight,” said one of those upright Justices to Penn, who had been putting law-cases with a puzzling subtlety. “Thereafter as the answers may be,” retorted the Quaker. The astonishing composure of his people is sometimes ludicrously displayed in lighter instances. I was travelling in a stage-coach with three male Quakers, buttoned up in the straightest nonconformity of their sect. We stopped to bait at Andover, where a meal, partly tea apparatus, partly supper, was set before us. My friends confined themselves to the tea-table. I in my way took supper. When the landlady brought in the bill, the eldest of my companions discovered that she had charged for both meals. This was

resisted. Mine hostess was very clamorous and positive. Some mild arguments were used on the part of the Quakers, for which the heated mind of the good lady seemed by no means a fit recipient. The guard came in with his usual peremptory notice. The Quakers pulled out their money and formally tendered it—so much for tea—I, in humble imitation, tendering mine—for the supper which I had taken. She would not relax in her demand. So they all three quietly put up their silver, as did myself, and marched out of the room, the eldest and gravest going first, with myself closing up the rear, who thought I could not do better than follow the example of such grave and warrantable personages. We got in. The steps went up. The coach drove off. The murmurs of mine hostess, not very indistinctly or ambiguously pronounced, became after a time inaudible—and now my conscience, which the whimsical scene had for a while suspended, beginning to give some twitches, I waited in the hope that some justification would be offered by these serious persons for the seeming injustice of their conduct. To my great surprise not a syllable was dropped on the subject. They sat as mute as at a meeting. At length the eldest of them broke silence, by inquiring of his next neighbor, "Hast thee heard how indigos go at the India House?" and the question operated as a soporific on my moral feeling as far as Exeter.

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN.

Sera tamen respexit
Libertas. —*Virgil.*

A Clerk I was in London gay.—*O'Keefe.*

If peradventure, reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life—thy shining youth—in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release or respite; to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six-and-thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing Lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant play-time, and the frequently intervening vacations of school-days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours' a day attendance at the counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became content—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music, and the ballad singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of

the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gew-gaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a week-day saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful, are shut out. No bookstalls deliciously to idle over, no busy faces to recreate the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated 'prentices and little tradesfolks, with here and there a servant maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour; and lively expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day look anything but comfortable.

But besides Sundays, I had a day at Easter, and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields at Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence; and the prospect of its recurrence I believe, alone kept me through the year, and made my durance tolerable. But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me, or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where was the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it

was vanquished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thralldom.

Independently of the rigors of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would sometimes rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance; but I did not know it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when, on the fifth of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L——, the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly inquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course

to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained laboring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner—the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life—when on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock), I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlor. I thought now my time is surely come, I have done for myself, I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L—, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me, when to my utter astonishment B—, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!), and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer. I do not know what I answered, between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted

their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—forever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet and Lacy.

Esto perpetua!

For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastile, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have all his Time to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward, or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition.

I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do *not* walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could read it away; but I do *not* read in that violent measure, with which, having no time my own but candlelight Time, I used to weary out my head and eyesight in bygone winters. I walk, read, or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me. I am like the man

—— that's born, and has his years come to him,
In some green desert.

"Years!" you will say; "what is this superannuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us he is past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For *that* is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own—that which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's Time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me threefold. My next ten years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the commencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are not yet gone, one was, that a vast tract

of time had intervened since I quitted the Counting-house. I could not conceive of it as an affair of yesterday. The partners, and the clerks with whom I had for so many years, and for so many hours in each day of the year, been closely associated—being suddenly removed from them—they seemed as dead to me. There is a fine passage which may serve to illustrate this fancy in a Tragedy by Sir Robert Howard, speaking of a friend's death :

———'Twas but just now he went away;
I have not since had time to shed a tear;
And yet the distance does the same appear
As if he had been a thousand years from me.
Time takes no measure in Eternity.

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to go among them once or twice since; to visit my old desk-fellows—my co-brethren of the quill—that I had left below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk, the peg where I hung my hat, were appropriated to another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D——I take me, if I did not feel some remorse—beast, if I had not—at quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils for six-and-thirty years, that soothed for me with their jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then, after all? or was I a coward simply? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also know that these suggestions are a common fallacy

of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not courteous. It shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long, for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell, Ch——, dry, sarcastic, and friendly! Do——, mild, slow to move, and gentlemanly! Pl——, officious to do, and to volunteer, good services! and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham or a Whittington of old, stately house of Merchants; with thy labyrinthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one-half the year supplied the place of the sun's light; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in the obscure recollection of some wandering book-seller, my "works!" There let them rest, as I do from my labors, piled on thy massy shelves, more MSS. in folio than ever Aquinas left, and full as useful. My mantle I bequeath among ye.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian, from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution re-

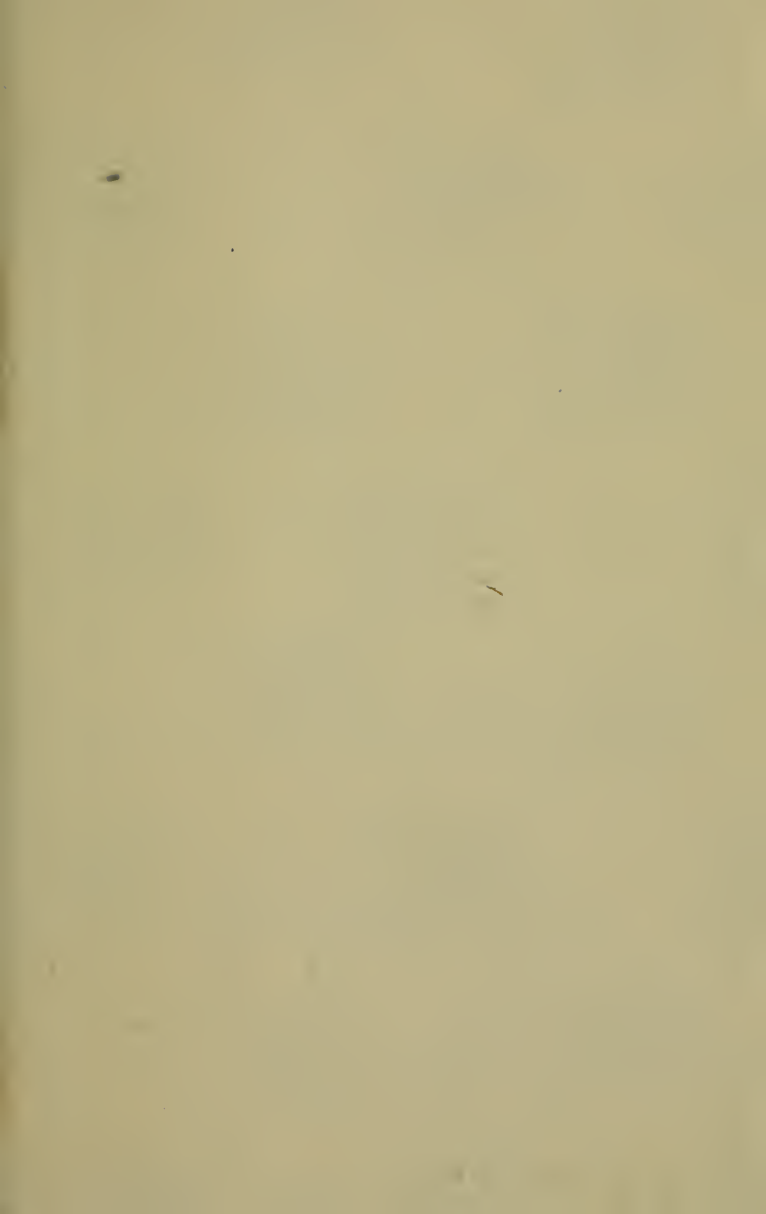
turned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. I find myself at eleven o'clock in the day in Bond Street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho, to explore a book-stall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in the morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish Street Hill? Where is Fenchurch Street? Stones of old Mincing Lane, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six-and-thirty years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is 'Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles. It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post-days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday night's sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, etc. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sat as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed that Ethiop white? What is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a

holiday, as it too often proved, what with my sense of fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a weekday. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cantle which it used to seem to cut out of the holiday. I have time for everything. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May morning. It is Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges, whom I have left behind in the world, carking and caring; like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round—and what is it all for? A man can never have too much Time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton-mills? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down

As low as to the fiends.

I am no longer —, clerk to the firm of, etc. I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating at no fixed pace, nor with any settled purpose. I walk about; not to and from. They tell me, a certain *cum dignitate* air, that has been buried so long with my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in

my person. I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I take up a newspaper, it is to read the state of the opera. *Opus operatum est*. I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked task-work, and have the rest of the day to myself.





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